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The Library and the Librarian

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THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES



To Sally



The Library and the Librarian

A selection of Articles from the Boston
Evening Transcript and other
Sources

By
Edmund Lester Pearson

The Librarian's Series

Edited by
John Cotton Dana and Henry W. Kent
Number two

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To the Editor of the LIBRARY JOURNAL:

The announcement that Mr. Edmund Lester Pearson has severed his connection with the *Boston Evening Transcript* will not cause unalloyed grief among library workers in New England. While the "Librarian" has caused some amusement among library workers, because of his caustic criticism and pessimistic attitude in general toward all matters of library administration, a great deal of harm has really been done among the loyal friends of the public library who were not acquainted with Mr. Pearson. Those who are engaged in the actual administration of library affairs have understood his pessimistic frame of mind, but among library trustees and those to whom we look for support and co-operation in carrying on the work of the library, his articles have had a most pernicious effect, and have, to a very large extent, been instrumental in delaying library progress all through New England, or perhaps, I might say, within the circle of influence of the *Boston Evening Transcript*.

The majority of trustees are interested in library work, and when once appointed naturally wish to acquaint themselves with the work and details of their respective institution, and of the organization as a whole. A weekly library letter in any newspaper would attract their attention and they would consequently be influenced by what they read. The more important the paper, the greater the influence of its articles. What has appeared in the *Transcript* has been accepted by the great majority of trustees as authoritative and serious, without any question, and not as an attempt at humor (real New Englanders do not consider the *Transcript* a humorous paper). It might be well to state, for the benefit of those who do not know, although no one could be more aware of the fact than Mr. Pearson, himself, that the *Boston Evening Transcript* is, in a sense, the New England Bible and is, perhaps, a part of New England conservatism which people living "outside the realm of light" do not understand but frequently criticise. What one reads in the *Transcript* is accepted as so, even if Mr. Pearson did write it. But our trustees never knew of the personality of the author of the "librarian" and therefore have been unable to make the necessary allowance for his warped and distorted point of view. As a special article, appearing regularly in the *Transcript*, it was naturally assumed that the writer was of the same broad-mindedness that is characteristic of newspaper men and "special contributors." An occasional fling would have been appreciated and enjoyed,

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NOTE

All but two of these articles have appeared in "The Librarian" department of the "Boston Evening Transcript". My thanks are due that newspaper for permission to reprint them. They are given here with no important changes, except that articles relating to the same subject have sometimes been combined, instead of being presented in the order in which they first appeared.

Of the other two articles, "The Children's Librarian versus Huckleberry Finn", was first printed in "The Library Journal" and that periodical has very courteously given consent to its republication. "An Amateur's Notions of Boys' Books" was read at the convention of the American Library Association, at Lake Minnetonka, Minn., June, 1908. I am indebted to the Publishing Board of the Association for permission to use it here.

E. L. Pearson.

Newburyport, Massachusetts
December, 1909

but continuous knocking showed that the writer was either disappointed in his ambitions, or was "rocking the boat" out of pure "cussedness." His satiric criticism on practically all library matters, state clubs, and the national association, has had serious effect, thereby influencing many in taking a decided stand against these organizations. Their impressions have been noticeable in important matters recommended by the American Library Association.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Pearson could not have directed his facile pen in a more constructive line. He would then have rendered a service, during the past fourteen years, of inestimable value to the library movement in New England.

HERBERT W. FISON,
Librarian.

Public Library. 1186230
Malden, Mass.



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THE LIBRARIAN IN FICTION

The librarian has never played a thunderous part in history. More inglorious, even, than the schoolmaster, he has usually been between decks with the women and children whenever there was trouble—so far as any record of him is obtainable. On him have fallen the jeers and jests reserved for the bookworm and the recluse.

Even today he is often regarded as one who must somehow be lacking, that he should by this choice of profession deliberately set a limit on his money-making possibilities. Too often there seems a need for a reargument of the thesis, so passionately asserted by many of the calling, "That the Librarian may also be a Human Being." One writer has objected to the wide-awake kind, and pleaded for a return to the half-asleep and covered-with-moss sort of librarian; but he is a literary person, himself, and of course peculiar. It is with the writers of fiction that librarians have their quarrel. Only here and there do they figure in novels and tales, but never in a pleasing light.

There is Doctor Gotthold in "Prince Otto." He is treated ungraciously all the way through, and finally left alone on the scene as a secret tippler—the worst kind, without the excuse of conviviality, or the generosity to provide another bottle of wine for a companion.

It is a far cry from the Principality of Gruenewald to Exeter,

N. H., but the librarian profits not at all from the journey. He is still fair game for annoyance. Mr. Shute, in the "Real Diary of a Real Boy", thinks it amusing to enter: "Dec. 23. Saturday and no skating; went down to the library to get a book for Sunday. me and Beany were sticking pins into the fellers and making them holler and Jo Parsons the librarian jumped rite over the counter and chased us way down to Mr. Ham's coffin shop. he didnt catch us either." Then the graceless wretch goes on to tell that he went to the house of some other imp and borrowed a dime novel—neglecting the opportunities of the public library and the improving conversation of Rollo and Jonas, for the adventures of "Deadwood Dick".

In "Golden Fleece", David Graham Phillips sends one of his characters to a public library. He does have the courtesy to say that the attendants were polite and obliging, but he spoils this by characterizing the only one mentioned at length as a busy-body and gossip-monger, and he finally refers to his "fat pasty face with its drapery of soft, scant gray whiskers".

Dr. Weir Mitchell, in his story of "The Mind-Reader", turns his hero from the medical profession into the position of assistant librarian in a curious kind of library. He intimates that the position is what is sometimes (regrettably) termed a "cinch". The hero seems to have nothing to do except engage in pursuit of criminals—one of whom comes in the library, by the way, to learn how to dispose of stolen wills. As this assistant librarian hires private detectives and distributes five-dollar tips, the inference is plain that he has some illegitimate doings with the cash drawer. As for the chief librarian, both author and illustrator have employed their powers of satire to the fullest on him. There he is, with moth-eaten whiskers, and horn spectacles, baggy as to the knees of his trousers, and fussy as to his manners. He tries to conceal his first name, always signing himself "D. Quarton." But it presently comes out that his given name is

"Duodecimo." His father, who was also a librarian, gave his son this name because he thought him unusually small as a baby. In the general distribution of wealth that takes place at the close of the story, the doctor gets a fortune and turns his back on library work immediately. Everyone gets something except poor old Duodecimo, who in return for years of obsequiousness to an eccentric millionaire finds himself and his library turned off without a cent.

Is it because authors are sometimes received in libraries without the reverence which their vanity requires that they are so fond of getting in a dig at libraries and librarians? Or does their pride smart because some one of their books has not been purchased in great enough numbers, or been perhaps excluded altogether? At any rate, many of them take pleasure in making us buy, catalogue, and issue books containing the most preposterous caricatures of our calling and ourselves. There is "The Jessup Bequest" by Miss Anna Robeson Burr. Of the "Chillingworth Library" in her book, she says, "The catalogue methods of the Chillingworth Library were such as to discourage culture. There was a catalogue, a time-worn volume in microscopic print, wherein the 'Autobiography of Leigh Hunt' was listed under 'Anonymous', and Swedenborg's 'Heaven and Hell', under 'Works of Imagination and Fancy'. This superannuated authority was backed up by a few drawers of cards in which the letter K stood represented by 'Keats, John, Life and Works of, 61, 107, 590, A. B. 2.' If you could remember this number and send it in, you might be quite sure of receiving a copy of 'Elsie Dinsmore.'"

Having spent her powers of sarcasm on the catalogue and other furniture of the library, the novelist turns to the people who managed it. "Behind the counter presided an exhausted librarian who seemed tacitly to echo the weary cry of King Solomon. He was aided by a frantic haired boy who lived in a chaos of half-remembered digits; and on holidays by a pretty, fluffy girl who

told you when you asked her for the 'Phaedo' that it was advertised but not published yet!"

Of all the comments of the writers of fiction upon us and our trade, this is almost the coolest! Leaving the abused catalogue out of the question, one is impelled to ask: who exhausted the poor old librarian, and caused him to think that of the making of books there is no end? Who but the writers of fiction? And who gave the fluffy girl no time to catch up with the Greek classics, but kept her dealing out the latest novels from dawn till dark? Was it the other librarians, or was it the modern novelists? To speak of piling insult on injury is all too tame to fit the case. There is nothing to do, but, in bitterness of heart, and with a deep, abiding sense of wrong, to suffer in silence, until some day when a librarian shall choose one of his colleagues for the hero of a story which shall represent him in his true light, struggling against "the onslaught of the savage hordes of the Six Best Sellers".

But against Miss Josephine Daskam we have the largest account of all. In "A Little Brother of the Books" she assembles three types—the head librarians of both sexes and the assistant—and dismisses them, one by one, in terms of scorn and derision. The male librarian apparently slept all day long, left the library to rack and ruin, and seems to have been discharged for incapacity and laziness. His successor is a most detestable type of bluestocking and female martinet, a devotee of red tape and cast-iron rules. The assistant is merely a vulgar person who reads "Molly Bawn", eats caramels, and refers to the theological collection as "those old religious books". They are all put to shame by the hero—a small boy, who proves to have not only more of the milk of human kindness, but a juster appreciation of literature as well. The man librarian had seen this, and had slept in peace, leaving the library in charge of the infant. The lady made some righteous attempts to alter the state of affairs, but finding that the readers regarded her as little better than a dragon, succumbed

also. It is a satisfaction to record, that in the end, the boy-hero caught some disease from a library book (another slander) and passed beyond.

After these distressing pictures from fiction it is best to look at two real instances. Over the first it is unnecessary to linger. In the "Lives of Twelve Good Men" anyone can read of "Henry Octavus Coxe; the Large-hearted Librarian." The charm of that alliterative title is alone enough to convince that he was a noble scholar without need of apology or defence. The other character is more complex, more important and more extraordinary. That one of the worst rogues and absolutely the most scandalous rake who ever described his own career should have ended his days in that sancticity which surrounds the librarian's calling is a paradox as delicious as it is unequalled. It illustrates how a repentant sinner chose to be a librarian as the surest means of grace. The doings of Giovanni Jacopo Casanova de Seingalt are told in what is to many very unedifying reading, but at least they provide a definite answer to the question, "Can the librarian also be a human being?"

One author says, "In 1789, Casanova was among the guests of the ambassador of Venice at Paris. Another of the guests was Count Walstein, with whom he fell into a conversation touching the arts of magic and the old clavicula of Solomon. Walstein, delighted with his new acquaintance, offered on the spot to make him the librarian of his castle in Bohemia. Casanova, old, poor and weary of adventures, grasped at the proposal. The very next day, in the count's company, he left for Castle Dux, near Toeplitz, the abode in which he was to spend, in peace and quietness, the fourteen years of life which yet remained to him. A librarian is not made every day out of an adventurer. But Casanova's character was strangely mingled. He was, as a parrot had summed him up, a rascal; he was a mixture of Gil Blas, Cagliostro and the Wandering Jew; but he was also a

scholar, a poet and a wit. To the count he was in every way an acquisition. He had looked with his own eyes on every side of life ; he was the prince of talkers and companions, and the count and the gay guests who thronged the castle, were never wanting for diversion, when Casanova told, across the wine, or round the ingle, the many-colored tales of his career. "

LIBRARIANS AND READERS

" Librarians, " said someone, " librarians are the people who keep you from getting the books you wish. "

It is curious that the notion persists of the librarian as a modern dragon. There is scarcely a public library which does not know one or two persons who are constantly in trouble with its rules. Like the politician who could not see why the Constitution should be allowed to come between friends, they are eternally annoyed to find that the usual regulations apply to them as well as to others. One man was forever sending for the librarian (scorning to deal with the humble assistant) to ascertain if he must really obey this or that rule. He was disturbed to find that he must, and finally ventured the opinion that the librarian was a " bureaucrat ". This sounding, as it did, of St. Petersburg and bombs, was a terrible thing to call a man, but the librarian was forced to put up with it.

" We are not fond of making rules, " he explained ; " every one we make is so much more trouble for us. It would be infinitely easier if we could put all the books in a heap on the floor and let whoever liked take what he pleased for as long as he desired. " The explanation was probably wasted. If the vague complaints against librarians could be boiled down into the brief articles of an indictment, some of them would probably run like this : First, that no book is ever " in " when it is wanted ; second, that the librarian sets himself up as one having authority to say what books

people shall not read ; third, that readers asking for bread in the shape of books are frequently offered a stone in the form of a card catalogue.

These accusations are more or less familiar to everyone. There is some ground for them, though it would be preposterous to blame the librarian for the first. His share of responsibility in the other two is limited—or, at most, a matter of difference of opinion. Instead of going over well-ploughed ground and attempting a defence, it will, perhaps, be more entertaining to consider the counter charges which librarians might bring against their readers. " Might bring "—for as a matter of fact they seldom or never do bring them. It is a well-recognized convention for a librarian to represent his clientele as composed entirely of reasonable and serious minded folk. The motives for this may not be unmixed, but in general the thing does not show to the discredit of the profession. " We prefer, " they seem to say, " to speak of the sensible people whom we have tried to satisfy, rather than of the occasional crank or bore, whom no one could please. "

A discussion of these latter gentlemen does not belong here. They are not "peculiar to libraries: they occur everywhere. There are, however, three classes of people whose reform would rejoice the hearts of librarians. It is significant of the fact that the complaint is not a bitter or illnatured one when it appears that the reformation would simply permit libraries better to serve these persons. They are, then, the reader who will not ask for what he wants ; the one who does not want what he asks for ; and the one who desires imaginary books.

Speaking of the first of these classes, Mr. William Warner Bishop, the superintendent of the reading room of the Library of Congress, said recently : "We could devote an hour to telling the experiences which we all have had in arriving at that most elusive object of inquiry—the thing a reader really wants to know about. The chief art of a desk assistant or a reference librarian

is, as we all know, the knack of divining by long experience what is actually wanted by inquirers. The fact that so few readers will ask directly for what they want, even when they have a clear idea of their needs—which is seldom the case—is perhaps a greater obstacle to successful reference work than poor equipment, poor catalogues, poor bibliographies. "

To find what a reader really wants is sometimes a little like the game of "Twenty Questions," and the reference librarian might well begin, on occasions, with the inquiry: "Is it animal, vegetable or mineral?" This hesitation of the reader to disclose his real needs comes from shyness, or a belief that he is saving the librarian trouble, or a feeling that he ought to be ashamed not to know where to look for the thing himself. Often he begins far off in his inquiries—thousands of miles away; and works toward his real object by almost imperceptible degrees. At other times he asks a number of wholly unrelated questions, casting a sort of fog over the situation, and then suddenly springs his real inquiry like an attorney during cross-examination.

An instance of the first of these methods occurred when a woman came into a reference library, leading a small boy by the hand. "Have you any books of travel?" she asked. They had—about twenty or thirty thousand, though the reference librarian did not say that. He merely replied in the affirmative and asked what she wished. "Oh, just some books of travel—haven't you got some handy? What are those over there?" "Those over there" were a miscellaneous assortment of new books, and there were some which described travels. "She is a casual reader," thought the librarian, "come in to while away an hour", and he brought her four volumes—the latest South Polar expedition, somebody's adventures in Tibet, a work recounting pleasures and perils in British Guiana, and a very much illustrated book about the missions of Southern California. With these the two readers retired to a table, and began turning over the leaves at

great speed. The woman soon returned to the reference desk, but as it chanced to be a busy hour she had to wait a few minutes while the reference librarian listened to the complaints of an old gentleman who had found that some miscreant had cut out a picture from the Scientific American—an act of vandalism which sadly interfered with his enjoyment of the other side of the page. After him, in order of precedence, came a little girl who said that the "teacher" over in the children's room had told her "to come over here and you would tell me how I can address a letter to Mr. Rudyard Kipling so he will get it all right." Then came a man who wanted last week's Saturday Evening Post as he had missed that installment of "The Firing Line", and then came Mrs. Homer Maclay.

Mrs. Maclay was in trouble as usual. She had been at the library early that afternoon to get a life of Watts—George Frederick Watts, you know, the painter. She had found out that he was Ellen Terry's first husband and so she wanted to read about him, and she had taken out a book that she had supposed was his life, and then gone all the way home and opened it and it wasn't about Watts the painter at all, but Isaac Watts the hymn-writer, and she had brought it back, and the young lady out at the desk said that it was against the rule to return a book the same day it was taken out, and that they were told they must not break the rule, and so she came in here to see if the reference librarian couldn't do something about it. She didn't want Isaac and she did want George Frederick, and it had cost her two extra car fares and all this trouble, and she thought the library was to blame anyhow, or that boy who got her the book was—why didn't he find out which Watts she was after? And she certainly didn't intend to go all the way home again with this old Isaac. The reference librarian felt very sure that Mrs. Maclay had merely asked for "a life of Watts," and he knew that Edgar, the fifteen year old page, did not profess

mind-reading, nor have any particular interest in discriminating between a Watts who wrote hymns and one who painted pictures. Neither of them was on a league nine, and both of them were dead, anyhow. But he also knew that in the end Mrs. Maclay would get what she wanted and it was best to give in gracefully at the start. So the rule was broken, as rules are always broken for persons who make themselves sufficiently obstreperous, and Mrs. Maclay went away with the book she desired.

All this time the travel lady was waiting impatiently. "Can't you let me see some more books on travel?" she asked. Certainly he could, and four or five more were fetched. Lady Cicely Waynflete's "Captured by the Moors"; Dr. Von Hohensticker's "Land und Leute in Samoa"; a motor tour in Spain, and so on and so forth. These entertained her and her son for half an hour. Then she returned in apparent bad humor. "These are not what I want," she remarked shortly.

The librarian thought he saw his chance. "What do you want?" he inquired. "Some books on travel—haven't you got any others?" The librarian groaned in spirit. He saw now what he had to deal with—a person who would not make known her specific want, but would waste her time and his trying to achieve it herself. And so it proved. The afternoon wore on and books of travels were deposited by the ton, so to speak, on the table where the woman sat. Finally she consented to narrow the field by admitting that she was particularly interested in Africa. The resources of the library on the subject of that continent passed in review before her eyes. She grew more and more acid in her manner. Finally she gathered together her bag and her boy, put on her gloves, and sailed down the room, stopping a minute at the reference librarian's desk. "I cannot find what I want; I shall have to go now." The librarian made one last effort: "Just what did you want?" he asked. The woman looked at him in the manner of one imparting the most delicate family secret. "My

little boy", she said solemnly, "wished to see a picture, a large picture, of an elephant. He wished to copy it. There was only one in all those books, and it was very small. I am very much surprised, and Leander is disappointed". The librarian moaned aloud as he took a large volume on zoology from a shelf nearby. He silently exhibited a very fine elephant, indeed. The lady said: "Well, it is too late now", and out she went.

"Now why", asked the librarian, addressing the ceiling of the reading-room, "why couldn't she have told me that in the first place? Why is it a base and shameful thing to desire a view of an elephant? Why was it only extorted from her at the eleventh hour?" And he called Edgar, the lightning page, and set him at work carrying off the one hundred and fifty volumes of the elephant lady's books, as a punishment for not having divined the unspoken thought of Mrs. Homer Maclay in regard to Watts.

The reader who does not ask for what he wants, and the one who does not want what he asks for are frequently combined in the same person. The traits overlap. A man came into a reading-room one evening and asked if there were any "essays" there. "I don't suppose you've got any essays here, have you?" was the form of his inquiry. Yes, they had, Macaulay's and Emerson's—would he like to see them? No, not those, exactly. Some others, then? Yes, some others. Whose, please? Oh, just some essays. So essays were brought. But they failed to please, and finally the man brought them back. He drew near the librarian. "To tell the truth", he remarked, as though there were a strong temptation to lie about it, "what I want is 'Quo Vadis',—have you got that?"

The reader who wants imaginary books appears in various forms. Sometimes he is of that familiar type, dear to the heart of all librarians, who wants "a red book." Or it may be "a brown book", but that is the limit of his information about it.

He had it a year ago, and he wants to read it again. What was the title? That, he doesn't remember. Who wrote it? Oh, he never knew that. What was it about? Oh, about a lot of things; it was full of information. He does wish he could get it. You must have it around here, somewhere — it was about so high. And he indicates with his hands the not very unusual height, known (in old times) as "duodecimo".

Some time or other there will be a librarian with a testy disposition and a strong right arm. And he will deal with this man. The accumulated and righteous wrath of years will be visited upon him. The librarian will grab him by the throat and run him back to the nearest wall, and bang his head against it — hard. "You wearisome ass!" he will say: "suppose you went to a city of half a million inhabitants, and went up to a policeman at the station and told him that you wanted to see a man who lived there. And that you didn't know the man's name, nor his house, nor his business. And that all you knew about him was that he wore a blue suit, or may-be a black one, and that he was five or six feet tall. Wouldn't that policeman ring for the patrol and have you before an expert in lunacy pretty quick? Well, here goes for you! The door? No, the window, by the shade of Sir Thomas Bodley! Heads, below, there!" And out the man would go.

That librarian would lose his job, and he would be held up to reprobation as woefully lacking in library ideals, and he would be openly denounced everywhere. But five thousand of his colleagues would gather in secret and they would send him an illuminated address, and vote each one to give a month's salary, and thereby they would collect \$900, and they would send him that, and they would pray for him every night, too.

In spite of the popular belief that a librarian spends most of his leisure reading the fascinating romances which his library has acquired that day, there are times when I find the evenings a little dull. Take last Friday, for instance. At half-past ten I was still awake, but as I had looked through four auction catalogues, seven bookdealers' lists, and a vast shoal of advertisements, I did not regard with enthusiasm the three numbers of the "Publishers' Circular" which still awaited me. I would have glared at them if I had not been too sleepy to glare at all.

Before I could take one of them up, however, the door of my room opened, and a man came in. I could not see him distinctly, as the only light in the room was on my desk. He stood for a moment looking at me, and I expected that he would apologize and back out. The apartment house in which I live has dimly lighted corridors, and it is not unusual to have people mistake my room for their own. Instead, he came nearer my desk and stood looking at me. He was an inoffensive-looking person, as near as I could judge. "Would you like to see my books?" he asked. I told him that I never buy from agents. He chuckled. "I haven't asked you to buy", he replied. "I doubt if you could buy them. It is my private library I am offering to show you. You won't have to put on your hat;—it is in this building. Will you come?"

I did not remember having seen the man before, but I had a fair idea what he wanted. There would be two or three hundred more or less dusty volumes, a worn-out encyclopædia—probably the Britannica, with sheep bindings in tatters—some subscription sets, and a few books which he would impress upon me, were

"over a hundred years old." Then I would be asked to make an offer for the lot. He would have an exaggerated notion of their value, and clearly show that he considered me a thief, unless I named a figure about eight times that for which they could be purchased in any second-hand shop. As always happens in such cases, there would be one or two books which I should be glad to have, but as he would sell the whole lot or none, I should only have the irritation of looking at them.

However, anything was better than straining my eyes over the "Publishers' Circular" just then, and I followed him out of the room. He went to the elevator and rang the bell. An astonishing thing happened, for the car shot up like lightning. Now, it usually takes George from six to eight minutes to wake up, and about five more to pull the lumbering old elevator up to my floor. George was a new man, too—or, at least, a new boy, for he had on a brand new, bright red uniform. We got in; and the car dropped at least twelve floors. As I live on the third floor this was rather disquieting.

The man smiled at me. "I suppose you suspect that I am the Devil", he remarked. "Worse than that", I answered, "I think you're a book agent." "Not guilty", he rejoined, "But here is my room; come in."

I followed him into a commonplace looking apartment. There was nothing devilish about it at all. He had a cheerful fire, an electric reading light over a large table, and a few plain book cases. A long tailed bird, a parrot or macaw, I think, stood on a perch eating a piece of apple. To make sure that I was quite awake I looked at some of the papers on the table—there was a *Munsey's Magazine* with an article by Brander Matthews on the French Academy, and a *New York Herald* with a caricature of Speaker Cannon. I had recognized the green cover of Stephen Phillips' "*Faust*" when the owner of the room gave me a chair and pulled a small revolving bookcase between us.

"I keep some of my best ones here", he said; "Here is a good one". And he handed me a small volume in a modern Russia binding. I opened it and looked at the title-page. "The True Precepts of the Dramatick Art" by William Shakespeare, Gent. The imprint was of London, 1615.

"What do you think of that?" he asked. "It's a very clever hoax", I said, "Who got it up?" He smiled again, and went over to poke the fire. "Do you think it a hoax?" said he. Evidently the man was a little simple-minded. "Of course it is a fake", I told him. "Don't you know there is no such work as this in existence? Don't you know there is no trace or mention of anything of the kind? Don't you know that if this were a genuine work every book collector and literary critic and librarian and Shakspearean scholar in the world would come tearing in here and drag it out of your hands, and that you could get heaven only knows how many thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars for it?"

He stood with his back to the fire and laughed. "I wouldn't get so excited", said he. "You haven't really looked at the book yet. Rather a bother to get up a hoax like that, don't you think? Not modern printing, nor paper, is it? Look at the opening page of the text, you will see there that it is an autograph presentation copy to Ben Jonson."

Sure enough there was some writing, illegible to me; and, at the end, the signature, much as it looks on the will, of "William Shakspeare". I put the book down. "I hope you don't think that makes me believe in your preposterous book", I said. There was something contemptuous in his manner, that made one forget even the politeness usually accorded a man who has been deceived by a literary forgery. Nevertheless he was so assured that it would have made me uneasy even if I had not had vague doubts about the book itself.

Forgery or not, it was an extraordinary thing, there could

be no question of that. The date, at least, had every appearance of being genuine, and if it were, I asked myself, why should not the rest be authentic? "It was published the year before his death, you notice", put in the owner of the book, who seemed to have followed my train of thought. Precisely; it was written during those last three years at Stratford. It had always appeared rather strange that he had written nothing at all at that time.

I reached out to take up the book again, but he removed it and said, "Here is something that will interest you more, perhaps. It is the prompt-book of Hamlet. It has the author's annotations and directions for the stage business. There are none given for the part of the Ghost—which was the part he played".

He said all of this in a matter of fact way that made it seem real enough. I turned over the pages of the thin little volume—torn, soiled, a little worm-holed in places. The margins of the leaves were filled with annotations, and I hunted for the third act when the king and Polonius are behind the curtain to see what the stage directions might be. In hunting I found a letter inserted between two leaves. The strange individual who owned these things spoke. "That is a letter to Burbage", he said, "from Shakspeare. It seems to be an answer to an inquiry about the insanity of Hamlet. But of course you do not care for forgeries!"

I began to feel apologetic. "I enjoy these very much", I told him. "But I must say they remind me of a passage I read somewhere the other day. It was about a Frenchman—one Monsieur Chasles. He was the first geometrician of France—what could you expect of a geometrician, anyhow? He let some one sell him a lot of autograph letters. There were three from Cleopatra to Cato, one from Lazarus after his resurrection, and one from Judas Iscariot to Mary Magdalene—all on paper and in the best of French!

As for your books they recall that one employed in 'The

Temptation of Friar Consol'. Do you remember? It was 'an uncut unique of incalculable value; the height of it was half a cubit, and the breadth of it the fourth part of a cubit and the thickness of it five barleycorns lacking the space of three horse hairs. This book contained within it diverse picturings, symbols and similarities wrought with incomparable craft, the same being such as in human vanity are called proof before letters and imprinted upon India paper; also the book contained written upon its pages diverse names of them that had possessed it, all these having in their time been mighty and illustrious personages; but what seemed most delectable unto the friar was an autographic writing wherein 'twas shown that the book sometime had been given by Venus di Medici to Apollos at Rhodes.' "

The small man looked a little bored during my recital of this paragraph. He made no comment on it, but remarked when I ended, "I have only one other Shakspeare item to show you". "I suppose it is a lost play," I suggested. "Yes," he snapped, "it is, 'The Raigh of King Alfred the Great', but you need not look at it. Do books with a history interest you? Here is a copy of Marlowe's 'Edward II', stained with his blood. He had it in his pocket when he was stabbed. And next to it is a small collection of the 'Federalist' papers. Alexander Hamilton had this in the boat with him when he crossed the river to the duelling ground." I suppose I looked a little incredulous at this, for he added, "It hasn't any blood stains on it, if that's what you are looking for." "Are you not going to show me General Wolfe's copy of Gray's Elegy?" I asked. "No, I am not," he said "but here is something more interesting." He drew a little book in green calf from the stand. "This is a book to appeal to a librarian for it is the catalogue of the library of Count Walstein compiled by his librarian Casanova." I gazed at the title page: "Catalogue des Livres dans la Bibilothèque de Son Excellence le Comte Walstein, par Giovanni Jacopo Casanova de Seingalt." It was

printed in Vienna in 1798. Casanova took his time to get the catalogue out, for he had been eight years in the count's employ when this was published, and the list of books was not long. However, he really was engaged more as an "entertainer" than as a librarian, and one did not have typewriters nor printed catalogue cards in those days.

Of all the personages who have been librarians at one time or another during their lives there is no one who seems so incongruous as Casanova. What the devil was he—the notorious adventurer and rake—doing in that highly respectable galley? But I looked with unusual delight on the pages of the tiny catalogue. I noticed that Casanova's ideas of cataloguing were of the most primitive variety, and I suspected that the whole thing was a piece of jobbery in which the printer and the librarian conspired to despoil "His Excellency the Count Walstein".

It was in the front cover of this book, by the way, that I first observed the book plate of the owner of these curious volumes. It was a neat red leather affair, stamped in gold with a head of Dante, and the usual "Ex libris" at the top. I do not think it was undue curiosity for me to look below the portrait for the name of the owner, but I might have saved myself the trouble. It was in Italian—a phrase of three or four words, not looking like a name at all. Unfortunately I do not read Italian, and try as I might, the next morning, I could not recall the words to look them up in Barette.

My host must have known, somehow, that I was looking at the book plate. (I do not see how he knew it, for he had his back turned at the time, and was poking the fire again. He seemed very fond of this pastime.) "Oh yes", he exclaimed, "that is my book plate. I am a great admirer of Dante. He was a clever fellow, though he didn't know everything". I thought his condescension toward Dante was rather quaint, but I didn't say so. An idea occurred to me and remembering the

volume of Stephen Phillips I had seen on the table, I asked him if he were also an admirer of Goethe and Milton.

"Why do you put them together?" he asked gravely; "No, I do not read Goethe. As for Milton, he is well enough. Did you know he wrote a five act tragedy once?" I assured him that I was not aware of it. "Here it is," said he. I did not believe him, but again it was, if not genuine, a very laborious hoax, indeed. The play dealt with the life and death of Cicero, and it was embellished with what my host declared to be a genuine letter from one of Milton's daughters to the printer. It was a pathetic little note and it said among other things: "Our father is more testy and in very truth groweth more choleric day by day." Everyone has pitied the three girls who had to stay indoors and listen to the dictation of "Paradise Lost" (and what was worse to "Paradise Regained") when they wanted to go out to parties and balls—or whatever Puritan girls went to in those days. Here was a witness to their anguish.

"Speaking of Cicero," said the man, "here is his treatise on the authorship of the Homeric poems. Translated by John Dryden, you will notice. Never heard of it? Well, it is very dry reading I assure you. But he proves beyond a doubt that the Iliad and the Odyssey were written by a Greek of the sixth century named Calisthenes." I could not stand this. "What do you mean by the sixth century?" I asked. "Why, the sixth century," he stopped and stammered a little. "The sixth century before the present era," he said at last. "But that is utterly absurd," I returned.

He interrupted me: "Not half so absurd as this. Look, here is a denial of the cherry tree story written by George Washington. It is awfully solemn. You would enjoy reading it." I refrained from any comment on this fabulous creation. But I noticed in the pamphlet, as I had noticed stamped on the book-plates of most of the volumes, three figures—a zero, followed by a nine

and an eight. The sign read 098, and it was repeated on nearly all of his books.

I was about to ask him its meaning when he inquired, "Do you care for manuscripts and autographs? Here is Lee's 'lost dispatch'—found two days before Antietam and sent to McClellan. It was wrapped around three cigars—the man who found it smoked two of them, but I got the other, and here it is. It is as dry as Cicero on Homer."

Here is a strategical study of Waterloo written by Napoleon at St. Helena,—'La Bataille de Mont Saint Jean'. And here is a copy of Corneille presented by Napoleon to some English girl at St. Helena. Look at the inscription,—he was trying to learn English in those days: 'to Miss Betty with Friendship'. Only the initial N as a signature."

This would be rather entertaining if you read Russian. It is the sealed orders given by the czar to the commander of the Russian squadron that came to New York during the Civil War. It contains instructions as to the course of the Russian fleet if England interfered on behalf of the South.

"Here is the rest of the diary of John Wilkes Booth. Stanton suppressed it all until 1867. Some of it was published then—this part never has been published. There is an account of the attempt to abduct Lincoln, as well as of the 'poison plot'. That would have succeeded if Lincoln had not by chance changed his druggist. To go back to the books. Here are two copies of Johnson's Dictionary. One of them is the identical copy that Becky Sharp flung out of the carriage when she left school. The other stood on Nelson's writing desk in his cabin on the Victory."

I took the latter from him and looked at it with some feeling. I did not like to know that he had it. Of all scenes in history there is none more pathetic than that of the little one armed man in his cabin before the fight, writing his last letters, worrying

his soul over his "beloved Emma", and putting at the head of his letter that most telling phrase: "In sight of the combined fleets of France and Spain, then distant about ten miles." He had always an ear for the dramatic, and no one could have composed that sentence better.

The owner of the book remarked meditatively: "He took this dictionary down from its shelf, and wrote his letters resting them upon it. He held the book upon his knee". I stared at him. "How do you know that?" But the man did not answer me. He took out his watch. "It is nearly twelve. I beg your pardon but I have to leave. I have an engagement in New York, and I must catch the 12.15. You will excuse me, I am sure".

He rather hurried me toward the door. It was five minutes before twelve. I tried to thank him, but he said "I will see you again in a few days" and I was left alone in the corridor.

I got up to my room somehow—I only recall three flights of stairs. George, the elevator boy, had gone to bed, and nearly all the lights were out. Since that night I have tried to find the man's apartment twice, but there is absolutely nothing below the basement.

As soon as I could I consulted a Decimal Classification to find what 098 might stand for. It says: "Imaginary books".

As for George, when I ask him what he has done with his red uniform, he only grins.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

The cataloguer was surprised to see the President of the Board of Trustees enter the room. Surprised, and a little terrified, as he always felt in the presence of this important old gentleman, who resembled Gladstone and did his best to play the part.

The President began in his customary oratorical manner: "I would be pleased, young man, if you would come out with me, to this catalogue of yours, and explain the entire system. I wish to be sure that I understand it perfectly. I may have occasion to consult it, or I may desire to explain it to some visitor. At present, I am not sure that I entirely comprehend its use. If I may disturb you—",

The cataloguer was already on his feet, relieved that there was nothing worse in view, and as they started toward the other room he began with the usual and hackneyed formula, "You see, it is a simple dictionary catalogue, arranged alphabetically. The books are entered under their authors, subjects and titles. The ———".

"Ah, yes," the President interrupted majestically, "I believe I am aware of that. What I wish to ascertain is its method of use. Now, here we are. Let us suppose that I desire to know what books the library contains on the subject of the Civil war. I am at present engaged—in so far as I can find the time, among other pressing duties, in the compilation of a history of my regiment, and especially its part in the Battle of South Mountain. Now let me see. Here is the drawer with its little label: Ci—Cz. That ought to be the one."

He pulled out the drawer and began to move the cards with deliberation. The cataloguer knew very well what was coming, and he waited uneasily. The President was a man whom it did not do to hurry or advise. Presently the card appeared. It said simply, "Civil War, U. S., see U. S. History—Civil War." The cataloguer felt that this was sound cataloguian and he was prepared to defend it, if need be; still he did wish that the President had not drawn a blank at the very outset. The President's eyebrows—they were large and bushy ones, wrinkled a little.

"See U. S. History, Civil War," he read in his most Edward Everett manner. "Well, I suppose we shall have to. Where is that? Oh, down there at the other end of the room? Rather a long walk, young man!"

And the two set out for the other end of the catalogue. "Now we have it. Here it is. U. S. History, ah, um, yes. Revolution, where is the card? What's this, War of 1812? No; ah, here we have it! Now, I must put on my glasses."

But the cataloguer had already read the card—for in place of the dozens he expected to see, there was only one, and it bore the neatly type-written inscription, "U. S. History, Civil War. Nothing doing." By this time the older man had adjusted, his eyeglasses. "What is this?" he inquired, "What does that signify?" "I'm sure I don't know," said the cataloguer, "there should be a lot of cards there. I don't understand it."

"Well, I am very certain I do not," returned the President. "I shall be very much surprised to learn that the librarian has not procured any books at all on the subject. However, my object now is to ascertain the use of this catalogue. Let us try again. The recent great struggle in the Far East is a topic which Mr. Mudge cannot have neglected. I have learned my lesson this time. We will look under "Japan. History."

The cataloguer hastily began: "I think, sir, you had better look—" "No, no, young man, not a word," the President

interposed. "You are supposed not to be here. I am one of your patrons—a workman, let us say, using the catalogue for the first time." To the uncomfortable cataloguer it seemed that he was an emissary of the Devil, but he didn't say so. The President advanced to the drawer marked "Japan" and began again. He was rewarded with this information. "Japan, History, War with Russia, see Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905."

The president had the air of a man whose worst suspicions were being confirmed, but whose patience and magnanimity were boundless. He tramped back to the letter R of the catalogue, and after a long and distressing interval he found the card he sought. The wretched cataloguer felt the ends of his fingers grow cold, and his forehead get hot as he read the one word, "*Stung!*"

An alarming purple hue seemed to spread over the President's face. The cataloguer really thought he was going off in an apoplectic fit. "I do not understand this," he burst out, "I never put any such cards here. Somebody has been playing tricks."

The President began to boom like a Chinese gong. "Young man," he said, "I do not pretend to be conversant with all the latest slang in use among street arabs. You are apparently an expert in that line. I have always thought you to be too young and too frivolous for your present position. I have always doubted the value of this new-fangled catalogue. My doubts are justified! I shall summon the librarian and direct him to return to the use of the book catalogue employed when Mr. Kirkwood was librarian." He touched an electric button and a bell began to ring, noisily. It made such a racket that the cataloguer turned to see where the sound came from. He looked into the face of his alarm clock, and thence about the familiar walls of his bedroom. He gave a sigh of relief to see that the indignant President had vanished and that there was nothing worse before him than the necessity of getting up.

THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN *VERSUS* HUCKLEBERRY FINN: A BRIEF FOR THE DEFENCE*

One by one the children's departments of the public libraries are putting up the little dimity curtains of Extreme Respectability, while from behind them appears the Children's Librarian shaking a disapproving head at two old friends who stand outside. "No, no," she says, "Tom Sawyer, and you, you *horrid* Huckleberry Finn, you musn't come here. All the boys and girls in here are good and pious; they have clean faces, they go to Sunday-school, and they love it, too. They say 'Yes, papa', and 'Yes, mamma', and they call their teacher 'Dearest teacher'. They never do anything bad or disrespectful. But you—you naughty, bad boys, your faces aren't washed, and your clothes are all covered with dirt. I do not believe either of you brushed his hair this morning, and Tom Sawyer, I saw you yawn in church last Sunday. As for you, Huckleberry, you haven't any shoes or stockings at all, and everyone knows what your father is. Do you suppose I would let you in here with Rollo and Jonas, and all these other precious little dears? Now, both of you run right away as fast as you can, or I will call the policeman and have him attend to you!"

Together with a great many other men and boys I have witnessed this moral scene a number of times, with a rising sense of sorrow and indignation. Not that I would breathe a word against the Children's Librarian. She has my deepest respect and admiration. She has been to a school where they study to be

* From "The Library Journal," July, 1907.

children's librarians—I never have. She has spent four or five years in children's rooms. I have only observed them (although with interest) from another part of the library. But one advantage she has not had. She has never been a boy. And I claim that possession of that qualification renders me able to judge fairly in the case of the Children's Librarian *versus* Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.

At first I have thought that the case need not be argued nor judged. I have felt like saying, "Tom and Huck, you wouldn't like it if you went in there. Their boys and girls are a set of little goody-goodies. There isn't one of them that would have rescued Becky from the cave as you did, Tom; nor one that would have risked his body and soul for Jim, as Huckleberry did. There is only one real boy in there—Tom Bailey of Rivermouth, and they will find out about him soon, and how he scared his townsfolk with a battery of guns, and then they'll put him out, for fear other boys will catch that habit. I know you, Tom and Huck, and so do lots of others, and I'd rather spend an hour on your raft than listen to that Jonas any day. There are some fellows we can get to come along with us. Tom Bailey, of course, and his Centipede Club, and a boy named Davy who has a Goblin with him—we'll get them. Then there's a boy from India called Kim, and two more from the same country—British drummer boys named Jakin and Lew—that lady wouldn't like them, either, because they swear and fight, but they amount to something, anyhow. If we want to talk with any girls, there's that Alice—she's English and rather prim, but she has some awfully funny friends. She'll do on rainy days when the raft is up at the bank. Now, come on, and leave the lady and her little darlings to themselves. All the boys and plenty of men will go with us, and the mother's pets can go inside and play with Little Lord Fauntleroy."

At first, as I have said, this has seemed the only thing for a

friend of Huckleberry and Tom to say. But the more one considers, the more one becomes convinced that Tom and Huck are urgently needed inside. There has been a great increase in boys' books during the last twenty years, but the condition of the class as a whole remains about the same. It is generally agreed that the English Tom—Tom Brown—is nearly incomprehensible to American boys. Harvey Cheyne of "Captains Courageous" is an extreme and detestable type to begin with, and his reformation is a trifle obvious and "preachy". None need inveigh against "Stalky and Co."—it never became popular with boys. As for the "Jungle Books", if they are, as some believe, the best of Mr. Kipling's work, they are entirely the most conscious, and appeal, I believe, more to grownups than to boys. Of Henty's international gallery of wax-works, it must be admitted that they are in demand, but the faint praise accorded them in the "A. L. A. Catalogue" seems a just estimate of their worth. Mr. Barbour's athletic stories are well liked, but they appear machine-made. Fairy tales are out of the province of my discussion, as are juvenile historical, biographical, or "scientific" works. In the class of fiction for boys there seems to be little left, except Alger, Castlemon, Optic and Co., and many of their works are barred out by the same authorities who exclude Tom and Huckleberry.

Now, just as certain novels for adults stand head and shoulders above the rest because their authors dared depict men and women as they are, these two books of Mark Twain, almost alone among boys' books, deserve the appellation "great"; because they present real boys. Not Henty's wooden heroes, nor golden-curled, lace-collared Fauntleroy's; but real boys, with all of boys' absurd superstitions, hunger for romance and adventure, and disregard for smug respectability. Their adventures are such as to compel attention and interest. Professor Brander Matthews well says that since Crusoe discovered the foot-print there has been

scarcely an incident in literature to match the moment when Tom Sawyer, lost in the cave, sees the hand of his enemy, Injun Joe. William Morris used to read "Huckleberry Finn" and declare it America's chief contribution to art. Professor Barrett Wendell in his "Literary History of America," makes a similar claim, while Stevenson's praise of the book is known to anyone who has read his letters.* But what do these scholars and literary men amount to beside the thousands of men and boys who have met with no better fellows in all the land of story-books than Tom and Huck, and who now see their old friends turned out of some library every year, and sent to herd with such cheap and vapid creatures as Bowery Billy, the Boy Detective!

"But," says the Children's Librarian, "I know the books are interesting and all that, but it only makes them the more pernicious. They glorify mischief. When Huckleberry Finn appears on the scene, what does he have with him? A dead cat! Is that the sort of thing we want to teach our boys to do? Why, somewhere or other, a library had these books, and the boys formed a Tom Sawyer Club, and they broke some windows and did something else, I don't know what. The books are irreverent toward sacred things and Sunday-schools, and oh, they are utterly bad, and I won't have them in the children's room!"

Against this it can only be urged that literature is nothing but a record of people doing the things they should not do; that condemnation of it for this reason alone is usually regarded among enlightened persons as bigotry; and that boys will have to be reared in cloisters if they are never to commit mischief. "Of

* As I revise this there appears in the *North American Review* an article on Mark Twain by Professor Phelps, of Yale. Professor Phelps thinks that "Huckleberry Finn" can be fully appreciated only by adults—children devour it, but do not digest it, he says. This is true only of the great books—"Alice in Wonderland," "Gulliver's Travels," and "Pilgrim's Progress," for example. Of course the last two were not written for children at all.

course they will be mischievous," she replies, "but we musn't furnish them with the impulse." Are you sure that these books do furnish the impulse, madam? Do not the stories about the boys made bad by them sound a bit thin? Now and then the newspapers tell of some young man who winds up a career of dissipation by murdering his whole family. As he stands upon the gallows he attributes his downfall to the day when someone tempted him to smoke a cigarette or drink a glass of beer. His own evil soul he absolves from blame, and puts it all upon that universal scapegoat, the cigarette. The sin he did, he would have done without the aid of cigarettes, and the mischief that boys commit, would be committed if "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn" had never been written.

I am appealing, with little hope, to a court whose decision is already rendered. The word has gone forth that these two books are to be condemned. Yet almost any hundred which the children's departments contain could be better spared. For a large class of boys there are fathers and uncles and big brothers who will see to it that they do not miss that trip down the Mississippi; that they too watch with beating hearts while Injun Joe and his pal unearth the buried treasure in the haunted house; that they know that glorious pair, the King and the Duke; and that they see the Shepherdsons and the Grangerfords and their feud. These grown men would as soon dry up the swimming pools in summer, or scatter ashes on the coasting hills in winter as to deny their boys what they themselves so loved twenty or thirty years ago.

But there is another class of boys whose relatives cannot provide any books. The public library is supposed to minister to these as well as to the others. Whether these know Tom and Huckleberry often rests with a lady who is horrified by a dead cat, and shocked at Tom's lack of scriptural knowledge. If these ladies could be prevailed to leave the case to their fathers or,

uncles or brothers there might be a chance for the poorer boys as well.

The words of my friend Frank Marshall bear on this subject. He was a director of his town library when they elected Miss Timmins to succeed old Mr. Wheaton, who had presided over the library for thirty years. Marshall's term of office, as director, expired soon after, but he told me that Miss Timmins promised well. "She is clearing things up," he wrote me, "and I am glad you advised me to send for her. It seems that she wants to open a room for kids, and they have told her to go ahead. The Junior and Bob are tickled, for old Wheaton used to drive them out sometimes, and he never was very pleasant to me when I went down to get books for them."

I went over to see Marshall last week, and I gathered that Miss Timmins had carried her clearing-up process too far to suit him. "We thought we were getting a dove," he said, "but we were fooled. It turns out that they give them some kind of sailing directions at that school, and one of the first articles is: into the fire with Mark Twain. Why, there was a dear old copy of 'Huckleberry Finn'—I believe it was the same one I used to read—and that young woman fell on it like a monk of the Inquisition, and burned it up. Bob had never read it, and when he went after it she told him that it was not a nice book at all. He told her I had advised him to read it, but that didn't make any difference. She gave him a thing called 'Little Brothers in Feathers and Fuzz,' or some such name, and told him to read that. He hasn't opened it. I'd lick him if he did. Simpkin, over here—you know what sort he is—chairman of the library board now; he succeeded me. He says the town has been reading too much fiction, and that Miss Timmins has already reduced the percentage of it by several points. I asked him whether he thought the 'Little Brothers' were a good substitute. He said they had ordered a good many books on nature. I tried to get

out of him what was the net gain to the town, if boys took home books they never read, but he is apparently satisfied if the figures make us out as suddenly increased in intellect by twenty per cent. I think it helps Miss Timmins along with the other librarians, too. You ought to know about that—does it?"

Marshall's sister came into the room before I could answer. She is president of the Twenty Minute Culture Club, of which, it appears, Miss Timmins is secretary.

Miss Marshall said, "Frank, I found the boys reading 'Tom Sawyer' and 'Huckleberry Finn'—they said you got the books for them."

"Quite so; I brought them out from town this afternoon."

"Why, Frank, don't you know Miss Timmins has banished them from the library? They are just as vulgar as they can be. Miss Timmins says that no children's library will have them now. She says that the famous library at——"

"Emily," interrupted her brother, "Miss Timmins is in supreme command in the curious looking room she has fixed up there. But she isn't here. I think she knows how to make the neatest letters with a pen I ever saw, and she is very sweet and kind with all those small children. I hear she tells them stories, which is certainly a change from old Wheaton, who used to get after them with a cane. But she doesn't understand boys. How could she? My opinion on their books is better than hers. When she sets herself up as an authority on that subject, she is meddling, just as much as I should be if I tried to teach little girls to dress dolls. As for you, Emily, I am very fond of you, but at times I suspect there is an infusion of buttermilk or weak tea in your blood. Your only writer is Jane Austen, or when you feel wild and desperate, Clara Louise Burnham. No wonder you are shocked at men's books. I remember you find Kipling too strong for your taste. Don't worry the boys, Emily. I didn't go to the bad on Mark Twain, and I think they'll pull through."

THE CATALOGUE BEAUTIFUL

"A Plea for the Popularization of Card Catalogues" is the title of a forthcoming pamphlet from whose proof sheets the following extracts are made, by permission. In the introduction the author dwells upon two facts, both of sufficient importance to attract the attention of librarians everywhere. The first is that the patrons of libraries are displaying a growing repugnance to the use of the card catalogues. As these cabinets of drawers increase in number until it seems as if the old joke about the catalogues of the Boston Public Library and Harvard University meeting on Harvard Bridge might become literally true, the mental distress and physical exhaustion suffered by those consulting one of them becomes too important to be disregarded.

Almost any day in any large library their fearful influence may be observed. Dozens of harrowed individuals are seen trying to think whether the name of Thomas De Quincy will be found in the drawer marked De or that labelled Qu. Then they make the choice—always wrong—and are seen, with pain only too apparent on their brows, dashing off to the other drawer.

The careworn man who wishes to read the novels of Mr. Winston Churchill is found pawing madly about the cards headed "Win". Rescued from this by a hurrying library attendant, and told the secret of the inversion of names, he attacks the letter C. Noticing by a sign that titles are also included in the catalogue he thinks he may as well go at once for the particular story of his choice, and proceeds to the "Carvel" part to find Richard of that clan. Again baffled, he has recourse to

another librarian, who says that in this case he should have sought the letter R and looked for Richard.

Already the madhouse yawns wide for the poor wretch, and who shall say what charge will be laid at the cataloguer's door in the Day when all things are accounted for?

Nor, according to the author of the pamphlet in question, are the consulters of the catalogues the only persons whose reasons are in danger. The cataloguers themselves, the very ones who sit all day spinning this codified brainstorm, are in peril. Not long ago a body of them got together and bound themselves by a fearful oath not to part until they had settled once and forever the question whether it is better to write "Department of Agriculture" or "Agriculture, Department of". They well knew that many a strong mind has come to ruin on this reef, but they were a reckless lot, and they plunged in. Midnight came, and found them still bickering. The struggle continued during the early hours of the morning, and at last the cold gray light of dawn looked in at the shutters, but whatever it saw, no solution of the problem was there, and the mental condition of the disputants has ever since been one upon which it is not pleasant to dwell.

"Consequently", says the writer, "it is more than plain, it is imperative, that something must be done. Cataloguers must not be allowed to dally with paranoia; nor library patrons to tremble on the brink of doddering imbecility. What shall it be? The human mind has not yet devised any better machine for its purpose than the card catalogue, nor is it likely to do so. Books pour in upon us, clamoring each for its card, seven and a half centimetres high and twelve and a half long, with a neat hole punched in the bottom."

"My solution is simple. The catalogue must be popularized. No longer shall the task of finding a book in the catalogue be weariness of the flesh alone, no longer shall the cataloguers find

their only joy in digging out the middle name and age of bashful authors. Reports, even bulletins, are nowadays made interesting. Why not catalogues? The frigid scheme of annotation did not do it, but that was because it did not work in the right direction."

"My plan is this: Let each heading, be it author's name, or subject entry, be followed by a card or cards bearing some brief extract, quotation, or original composition, throwing light or giving information on the subject that shall be inspiring and instructive and whet the appetite for more. To illustrate, let us suppose that the reader is looking up the subject of camels. What could be more useful, after he has read over the cards showing the library's resources on the topic, than to find the following entry, giving as it does, a perfect insight to the mind and character of the animal:

'The 'orse 'e knows above a bit, the bullock's but a fool,'

'The elephant's a gentleman, the battery mule's a mule;'

'But the commissariat cam-u-el, when all is said an' done.'

'E's a devil an' a ostrich an' a orphan-child in one.'

"There you have the expert opinion which satisfies the requirements of Mr. George Iles, as well as a note which will spur the investigators to more thorough research."

"The same writer may be drawn on under the author entries as well as under those for subject. In the catalogues of most libraries may be found the heading, 'Roberts, Frederic Sleigh Roberts, first earl, 1832.' There will occur a card for "Forty-one Years in India," and perhaps one or two other books. In my scheme another card should be added with the lines:

'There's a little red-faced man

Which is Bobs,

Rides the tallest 'orse 'e can,

Our Bobs.

If it bucks or kicks or rears,

'E can sit for twenty years,

With a smile round both 'is ears,
 Can't yer, Bobs?'
 If you stood 'im on 'is 'ead,
 Father Bobs,
 You could spill a quart o' lead
 Outer Bobs.
 'E's been at it thirty years
 An-amassin' souveneers
 In the way o' slugs an' spears—
 Ain't yer, Bobs?'

"To turn from men of action to men of letters, a brief characterization of an author will be found decidedly helpful if inserted in the catalogue, neatly type-written on a card. For American writers the "Fable for Critics" offers many suggestions. This for instance, should follow the name of N. P. Willis:

There is Willis, all natty and jaunty and gay,
 Who says his best things in so foppish a way,
 With conceits and pet phrases so thickly o'er-laying 'em,
 That one hardly knows whether to thank him for saying 'em;
 Over-ornament ruins both poem and prose.
 Just conceive of a Muse with a ring in her nose!

"Even the gravest and dryest subjects can be so illumined by the sweet light of poetry that people will begin to call for books that have hitherto been mere accumulators of dust. The American Library Association's 'List of Subject Headings' includes the formidable word 'Anthropology'. What workman or mechanic will ever be tempted by that frightful word inscribed though it be in letters of red, to learn about those charming individuals who 'drew delightful mammoths on the borders of their cave'?

A poet comes to our rescue to tell us of primitive man:

'He worshipped the rain and the breeze,
 He worshipped the river that flows,
 And the dawn, and the moon, and the trees,
 And bogies, and serpents, and crows;

He buried his dead with their toes
Tucked up—an original plan—
Till their knees came right under their nose :
'Twas the manner of primitive man !

" Again, the subject heading " Prehistoric Archaeology " never allured a shop girl from her mad pursuit of McCutcheon nor led the young lady from the high school out of the dangerous morasses of Marie Corelli. How different if she could have been made aware of the fascinating nature fakirs who tell of the fauna of that ancient time when

' There was a little animal no bigger than a fox,
And on five toes he scampered over tertiary rocks ;

They called him Eohippos, and they called him very small,
And they thought him of no consequence, when they thought
of him at all ;

For the lumpish old Dinoceras, and Coryphadon so slow,
Were the heavy aristocracy in the days of long ago !

" Thus ", concludes our author in his somewhat florid vein, " a dawn of gladness is breaking, alike for the public and the weary cataloguer. No more will strong men tear their hair and curse when directed by the loan-desk assistant to look this up in the catalogue, please. On the contrary, the catalogue will be surrounded daily by an eager throng and its consultation will be attended by all the joy that might come from a perusal of ' Elegant Extracts '. No more will the cataloguer be sicklied o'er with the pale cast of Cutter's rules nor be borne away shrieking when she finds that all the books laboriously entered under the name B. L. Putnam Weale were really written by a perfidious man called Simpson. Counting fly leaves, and recording such matters as ' 3 p.l., xiii, 9, iv., 326, front., illus., plates, diags., 23 1-2 cm '. will not be the whole of her existence. The greater ecstasy of literary research shall be hers, and in her eyes a brighter iris blossom. "

MRS. POMFRET SMITH VISITS THE LIBRARY

" Just tell Miss Anderson, that Mrs. J. Pomfret Smith is here, will you ? Oh, here she is now ! Oh, my dear, you've got your things on ! Are you going home ? You're not *very* tired are you ? I've got to read a paper before the Twenty-Minute Culture Club, on the 'Decadence of French Literature' and I know you'll help me look up these books. You are so much better than these girls out here at the desk. I *hope* they didn't hear me ! Are you *very* tired ? It won't take you but just a jiffy, I'm sure. "

Miss Anderson was very tired indeed. The librarian had conceived the notion that morning of holding an exhibition of books and pictures on the subject of Navajo blankets, and she had been working at top speed to get it ready. It was now five o'clock, and she had exactly two hours to do three necessary errands, get home to her dinner, and catch a car which would land her at the Hubbard House Settlement at seven o'clock, where it would then be her privilege to supply books for two hot, ill-ventilated hours to a noisy crowd of unwashed children. She knew exactly the sort of headache and feeling of stickiness that would be hers at nine that evening.

But she smiled pleasantly at Mrs. J. Pomfret Smith, who had already produced her list, and begun to talk again. " Oh, dear ! these horrid French names ! I can't manage them, but I've got to get this paper ready. Now, this says to look up Alfred de Mewzet—he wrote novels, didn't he, or am I thinking of

Dammus? Anyhow, get me some of his books; translations, of course, and is Marie Corelli, French? She sounds so, doesn't she? And who is Decameron? He isn't modern, is he? Some of these things are *awful*; I told Pomfret the other night I couldn't see why they were allowed in the library. This outline says: note Decameron's influence. Then I want some novel, by Lote-eye. He's the man who went crazy from drinking absinthe and shot himself in the cafe where he used to write poetry, isn't he? Or was that Ouida? No, she was a woman, but was she French? Her name was 'de la' something, so I suppose she was."

Mrs. Smith interpolated these bits of literary gossip during Miss Anderson's trips between the catalogue, the book stacks and the issue desk. The pages had gone to their early suppers all but one; and Miss Anderson lugged out armfuls of books herself. The clock went from quarter past to half past five. She had eaten her luncheon in ten minutes that noon, and the indications were in favor of about five minutes for her dinner. Mrs. Smith was still fresh however.

"There's a critic I want to get hold of; what's his name? Oh, yes, St. Boove, have you got any of the books by St. Boove? I want something to sum up the whole period. Dear me, is that clock right? Why it's ten minutes to six! *Take these books with me?—gracious, no!* I don't want them *now*, and I couldn't carry all those. I'll just come around next Tuesday and look them over here. I wanted to be sure you'd got them all, and you've been *perfectly lovely*. Now, you just put them away somewhere, where nobody will get any of them, will you? I know it's against the rules, but I guess it will be all right."

The librarian was in his office putting a final polish on his annual report. "Cooperation and helpfulness are the keynotes of our library service," he wrote; "Much valuable work has been done in affiliation with the study clubs of the city."

MYTH

Every profession has its legendary characters. We are all familiar with the marvellous lawyer, who without any other preparation than the consumption of a quart of whiskey was enabled to carry on the examination of witnesses, to debate on legal points, and finally, after two or three days without food or sleep, to make an impassioned appeal to the jury, which resulted in the triumphant acquittal of his obviously guilty client. Then there is the doctor who in former days astounded rural communities by diagnosing cases at ten miles distance, and predicting with absolute accuracy the day and moment when his patient would recover.

Now without discussing whether library work may claim to be called a profession, it has, at least, this mark of one. It has its legendary characters. They are the omniscient old gentlemen who knew the entire contents of every book in their libraries. Not only that; but their knowledge and memory were still more extraordinary. The tales usually ran in form something like this: "Why, old Mr. Bookworm has the most marvellous memory! If you ask him where you can get information on *any* subject, he will say, 'You go upstairs, and turn into the fourth alcove on the right hand side. Look at the shelves on the left and count three from the top; take down the seventeenth book from the right—it is the twentieth-sixth from the left. Open it at page fourteen hundred and sixty seven, which is the left hand one. Run down the page until you come to line twenty-three. You will find there exactly what you want!' "

It may be merely the envy of a degenerate race of librarians, who know more about catalogue cards than about books, which prompts us to feel some suspicious misgivings about this old gentlemen. Of one thing we may be assured—if he were alive today even in the present disgraceful condition of library salaries, he could command an income that would enable him to go in for first folio Shakespeares, and ocean-going steam yachts. But, as we sometimes wonder where all this talk about unicorns arose if they are really (as Alice thought) nothing but " fabulous monsters ", so, we may inquire, is there not some foundation for the stories about Mr. Bookworm ?

We will answer this right away. There is. A reputation for supernatural learning is sometimes as easy to gain as one for ignorance. Everyone has probably had the experience of finding himself regarded as an authority on some subject when he knew very little about it. It is only necessary that this subject shall be one of which the average person is in total ignorance. If you know a trifle about heraldry, for instance, or edible mushrooms, how soon does it go abroad that you know " all " about it ! So with the fabulous librarian. He made a few lucky hits, induced by the powers of memory which long familiarity with books procures, and immediately the myth arose. He was helped, too, by the fact that in his day books were far fewer, human knowledge much more limited, and the inquiries which came to him far less varied than is the case today. We would like to maintain a respectful admiration toward him. But it must be confessed that a mythical librarian of powers more than human is a fearful nuisance to those of us who are only mortal.

For one thing, Mr. Bookworm is probably responsible for that famous remark which originated in the fourteenth century, and is still hurled at librarians—" Well, I suppose you have read all the books in the library ! " Its brother is like unto it—" It must be nice to be a librarian, and just read all day long ! " Then,

too, he is to blame, when we are expected to know immediately whether our library (which contains four hundred thousand volumes) owns a certain book or not. This is flattering to our powers of memory, but the diminution of respect that ensues when we have to consult the catalogue to find out, just as if we were ordinary human beings, is very painful, indeed. "Why, I thought you would know right away,—old Mr. Bookworm would." "Yes, Madam", we will shriek some day, "Bookworm would know, and if I had him here now, I'd stuff the book down his throat!"

POEM

By Miss Pansy Patterson

Miss Pansy Patterson "fears that 'The Librarian' is a very ill-informed person, without high ideals." She is "especially distressed at his erroneous notions about Children's Librarians." So she sends a little poem to correct these false impressions. Here it is.

THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN

On Monday mornings, bright and fair, she takes her childish
band
To hear the little birdies peep, so they may understand
That the vocalizing methods of the yellow-crested wren
Are easy to distinguish from the common garden hen.

That afternoon, at three o'clock, they fare unto the park
And spend the happy moments till the coming of the dark ;
So when they toddle home again, there's not a child but
knows
That the salmon-footed bullfinch won't associate with crows.

On Tuesdays you will find her, she is on the spot once more,
Expounding to her little ones all kinds of useful lore ;
She takes the purple pimpernel and cuts it up in bits
To show them if they chew it they'll assuredly have fits.

When the clock on Wednesday morning has scarcely sounded
nine,
She has her bunch of urchins a-standing in a line,
A bee-hive is before them, and by lure of cakes and jumbles
They learn to tell the honey-bee from ordinary Bumbles.

Now Thursday is the day of days that's ever set apart,—
Devoted to the practice of the flower of her art.
She draws them all around her, on the floor she sits, herself,
Regaling them with stories of hippogriff and elf.

On Friday she is at it hard, from early morn till night,
Imparting unto little boys how bad it is to fight;
Discoursing unto little girls of how to dress a doll,
And warning both the sexes 'gainst the snares of Alcohol.

With ruthless hand, she confiscates the vicious cigarette,
And expurgates such phrases as "I reckon" and "I bet";
She gives a little homily on "Books That Are a Sin"
And pours the vials of her wrath on "Huckleberry Finn".

On Saturday she leads a class in making paper fans,
And sanitary pies of mud in hygienic pans,
In weaving little dinky wreaths of buttercups and myrtles
And teaching tricks of kindness to pollywogs and turtles.

And if, by chance, she finds the time, she puts it in (for looks)
In furnishing their infant hands with infant story-books.

" THAT GIRL AT THE LIBRARY "

An extract from the diary of Miss Helen Martin, assistant in the circulating division of the——Public Library. The entry is dated Jan. 30, 1909, and it was written on Jan. 31st.

When I got home last night I found a letter from Mabel Oliver. I did not open it then, but I did this morning. It was mostly about her visit in New York, and the plays she has seen. One part appealed to me particularly. It was: " I wish you would tell me about your library work. It must be awfully interesting, seeing so many of the new books, and then you must meet some weird people. Do tell me about it. " Well, I started to write her about it, but I tore the letter up, thinking, " What's the use ? " I believe it would do no good to give her the idea that there is nothing to library work besides the return desk. I know that there is something else, though I have not experienced much of it so far. I have had a year of the circulating division now—counting my six months' apprenticeship. If everything goes well, if the city council grants the appropriations, if Miss Macomber does not get too ruffled, if Mr. Pierce does not change his mind (as he usually does)—if I do not make any very bad breaks—and a few more " ifs ", I ought to get that promotion into the reference department next June. There I may see a little more of the insides of books, and have some of the library work of which I dreamed. In the meantime I am going to write about yesterday's experience in this diary, for my own amusement. Perhaps it was not an " average " day. Certainly I have never

had Mrs. Pomfret Smith, Miss Cecil Calvert, Mrs. Douglas Boomwhacker, Mr. Paddock, Mr. Bakkus, Mr. Titewad, and the Clarke twins, all in one day before. Moreover, it was a record breaking day for circulation, and so I suppose there were more books returned than usual. But Miss Barlow, who has been in the division seven years, said it was nothing extraordinary, and that she had known people compared with whom Mrs. Boomwhacker and the rest are as turtle doves. So I don't imagine there is anything unfair in recording what happened to me yesterday.

The morning really should have been free for me, and as I was on duty until nine in the evening I was not due to arrive at the library until one o'clock. But Mr. Pierce is getting up his exhibition of books on "domestic science" and he is already busy on an article for the Library Journal about it. Wednesday he called for volunteers to work over time on this exhibition. Someone had volunteered from all the other divisions, and Miss Macomber intimated pretty strongly that one of us had better do so. Miss Abrahams and Miss Thomas were on duty at the desks in the morning, anyhow; Miss Sullivan is just getting over the measles and isn't very strong yet, so that left only Miss Merryfield and me. No one ever expects Louise Merryfield to do any more than she has to, as her uncle is a trustee of the library. Mr. Pierce and Miss Macomber think they are quite lucky when Miss Merryfield does any work at all, and as she gets a promotion as often as there are any to be had, she herself does not feel the need of extra exertion. It was distinctly up to me, so I presented a smiling face yesterday morning at nine o'clock and five of us spent three hours in the exhibition room up stairs. It was so cold there at first that we all wore coats, but by standing on one foot at a time, and waving our arms about we managed to keep warm. We got the books arranged, the special labels on them, the lists posted, the notices, pictures, and

posters up, and nearly everything done by half-past twelve. At eleven, Dennis, in response to our requests for more heat, got the steam radiator into full operation and the temperature went to 85 degrees. When we left the room at 12.30, Mrs. Greenwood, the shelf-lister, and I decided we didn't want any luncheon as we both had splitting headaches. We spent the half hour walking around outdoors, and came back at one o'clock. I helped Miss Macomber on the month's statistics until three o'clock, and then relieved Miss Merryfield at the return desk. She was excused early, to go to the Elmendorf lecture.

The person at the return desk sits on a high stool and presides over four or five large trays of cards. These cards are set on end and arranged by date. Each one of them belongs in a little pocket in the back of a book which is out of the library on loan. When a book is returned you have to open that book, notice the date on which it was loaned (this date having been stamped on a slip of paper in the back of the book) find the card among the thousands in the trays, and put it back in its little pocket, having first removed another card (the "reader's card") from that pocket and stamped on that (with a miserable little stamp attached to a lead pencil, which sometimes stamps clearly and usually does not) the date on which the book is returned. I have read over that sentence four times and I do not believe that anyone could exactly understand it. But I understand it and so will anyone who has ever performed the ghoulisn operation. The others don't matter. Then you give the "reader's card" back to the person who has returned the book — unless he has had the book out longer than the rules allow. In that case you tell him, or her, how much he owes the library — at two cents a day, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he pays over that money promptly and without a fuss. Often he has computed it himself and has the four or six or eight cents, or whatever it is, all ready. In the other case he, or she, makes some kind of a fuss.

On a "rush-day" when there are over two thousand books returned, there is the possibility of about twenty fusses during the day, or say, fifteen between three and five in the afternoon and seven and half-past eight in the evening, which are particularly busy periods. The books, as fast as they are returned, must be hastily glanced at, to see if they have suffered any obvious injury, and then placed on a truck which is wheeled off by a messenger as soon as it gets full, to be replaced by an empty one. I have known a decent looking man to return a book which was simply dripping with mud and muddy water and to declare up and down that there was nothing at all the matter with it, that he had not dropped it into a mud puddle, and that we were a lot of cranky old maids anyhow, and if we didn't keep quiet and give him another book and say no more about it he would write to Andrew Carnegie "and have the whole lot of us fired". The number of persons, by the way, who are on intimate terms with Mr. Carnegie is appalling. One old woman, who insists on abstracting the directory from the registration desk just when it is most needed, gets a letter from him nearly every day, and she informed me last week that "Andrew had got his eye on yez".

But it is three o'clock on Saturday afternoon, and I am beginning at the return desk. Books are coming in fast now, for everyone is returning what he had, and getting another for Sunday. By about half-past three a line has formed extending nearly out to the door. In some libraries I believe this line never occurs—they use a shorter process in the return of their books. Yesterday there were forty to fifty people in line several times during the day. There are some who object to standing in line. I am grieved to say, and I never would admit it to a man, but these are usually women. In fact for downright disagreeableness—pretty cattishness—women are the worst. Men sometimes swear at you, and I have had experience with one or two drunken

ones—witness Mr. Bakkus last night. But the women! Well, take Miss Cecil Calvert—a curious looking creature in a purple gown. She arrived about quarter to four, when I was taking in books, leaning and stretching forward and back over the trays, stamping and handing back cards and calling frantically to Jimmie to bring another truck. She wouldn't take her place at the end of the line, not she! She tried to elbow her way into several crevices, but was promptly baffled by persons who were already there. Then she came to the head of the line and tried to hand her book over the head of the man whose book I was at the moment discharging. Now, Miss Macomber has forbidden our taking books in this way, for just as soon as the people in line see it succeed, the line breaks and the whole forty swarm about the desk in a confused mob. So I kept on taking in books and ignored the copy of "Septimus" which she pushed under my nose. This made her furious, but I could not hear what she said, and presently she went back to the end of the line. By chance, the last person in the line was a little darkey, about ten years old. This caused her to boil over, and she came back to the desk and slammed her novel down on it. Did I know who she was? Did I know that she was Miss Cecil Calvert, and a member of one of the first families of Queen Elizabeth County, Maryland? Was she to be kept standing in line behind a little nigger? She reckoned she would see about that. And she gave the book a vicious shove, so that it fell into my lap, and then she stalked out of the library.

The man at the head of the line was a common-looking individual, and when Miss Calvert had gone he remarked sympathetically "I hope you don't have many of the first families, Miss." The next man was Mr. Titewad. His book was a day overdue, and I informed him that the fine was two cents. He said he had never received any notice that the book was overdue and that he didn't intend to pay it. It was not the money

he cared about, but the principle, he said. I told him that even if the notice had not arrived, that he was supposed to keep track of the time himself. He still refused to pay, and told me to give him back his reader's card so he could get another book. I replied that I was forbidden to return any card on which fines were unpaid, whereupon he spluttered, snapped his fingers at me and said: "Come, come, young woman, give me my card, give me my card!" As I did not do so, he went away in search of the "real librarian", as he called him, to make a complaint, and I have not seen Mr. Titewad since. The rest of the people in line had heard Miss Calvert's outcries, and were inclined to be agreeable to me. Somehow the announcement that one belongs to the first families never wins a great deal of admiration. The line cleared quickly and easily. One of the last ones in it was Mrs. Marietta Cooper Collyer, the author. She is an old dear. She comes into the library nearly every day, always goes away with three or four books, and though she is over eighty years old never makes any trouble at all. All of the girls like her and will do anything for her.

A line formed again about four o'clock and at the very head of it was Mrs. J. Pomfret Smith. She returned her book, and began: "Have you read this? It is Corell-eye's 'Holy Orders'. It is just lovely. I read all of her books. Don't you? I wonder if you can get me another of hers. Oh, I just read them over and over. Now, there was 'The Sorrows of Satan'. Lots of folks didn't like it, but I did. Her books have such a lovely moral in 'em. Did you read 'Vendetta'? I read that four times. Of course, it was horrible and all that, but I think that man was right. Don't you?" While Mrs. Smith was discussing Marie Corelli, the line was surging behind her, a very small man with three heavy volumes was swaying under their weight as he held them toward me at arm's length, and a massive woman with a pink feather boa was apparently about to beat Mrs. Smith over the

head with an umbrella. I told Mrs. Smith that I had not read "Holy Orders"; that she could get any book she wished from the issue desk; and would she kindly move along, as there were a number of people waiting behind her. "Oh dear," she said, "have I kept anyone waiting? I am so sorry! Can't you give me any books? Oh, at the other desk! I see. Well, I'll go there. Only, I don't know that girl. You must read 'The Sorrows of Satan'. Now, remember. Let me see, this is my card. I'm always so afraid I'll lose it; it's an awful bother. Here it is and there's my purse, and here's my edging. Well, goodby!" She went away, and I took the three heavy books from the small man.

Next after him came the massive person with the pink boa. She handed me her book and while I was discharging it, leaned over the desk so that her umbrella, which she had under her arm, gave me a violent jab in the face. "Ain't that 'Holy Orders' over there? I've been trying to get that for two weeks. Now you just give it to me right now!" I had observed her name on her card—it was Mrs. Douglas Boomwhacker. I had often heard of her from the other girls—they usually ran when they saw her coming, but I never had met her before. Her book was four days overdue and I told her the fine amounted to eight cents. "That's all right, you'll get your eight cents quick enough, don't you worry over that. I suppose you girls get all the chewin' gum you want, havin' all this money handed in here. Just give me that 'Holy Orders' will you?" I told her that I couldn't issue books at this desk. "Why not," she snapped, "piece of silly red tape!" And moreover I told her that by a rule of the library a book could not be issued again on the day it is returned. She wanted to know why not. I told her that it had to be examined, classified, and go back to the shelves with the others that were returned. Really, there is also another reason for the rule—it is to prevent little cliques from keeping a book among themselves weeks at a time, but I thought it useless to explain that. At the same time I felt sorry

for her, for it must have been irritating to see the book she had been after so long and not be allowed to take it. But I soon lost whatever sympathy I felt, for she suddenly leaned over the desk and made a grab for the book. I removed it from her reach and put it out of harm's way, but I was not quick enough to catch a tray of cards which she upset in her sudden manouever. (It took two of us half an hour to arrange the cards, and the work of the desk was confused and delayed all day.) Mrs. Boomwhacker grew crimson when I took the book away, and turned on me : "*You young snip in glasses !* What do you mean ? Give me that book this minute !" I told her the rules forbade my doing so. Goodness knows I hate the sound of that word "rules" myself, and it always infuriates the public. "Who made the rule ?" snarled Mrs Boomwhacker, "did you ?" I said that I did not, and she remarked that she was going to write to the papers about it. Was this a free library or were we running it for our own fun ? Didn't we have anything to do but make rules ? In the end she tore up her card and threw the pieces in my lap and walked out, fuming with rage. Miss Barlow says that it is the fourth card she has torn up, that she will come back and pay the fee for a new card in about a week. And because this is a "free public library" and Mr. Boomwhacker's brother is an alderman, she will be allowed to repeat this scene to her heart's content. It is the third time she has given an exhibition over this same business of trying to get a book that has just been returned. She always tries it with one of the new attendants, says Miss Barlow.

Of course, during the afternoon and evening there came scores of pleasant, courteous people, who handed in their books, took their cards and went away. But when one's nerves are tired, when one has been working for hours in a badly ventilated room, little incidents like Miss Calvert and Mrs. Boomwhacker make an impression. Sometimes I wonder whether the feverish anxiety Mr. Pierce displays to get people to come to the library has really

increased its value. Of course the use of books is very much greater--twenty years ago the library must have been more dead than alive. But I cannot help, now and then, having a suspicion that such a desire to get people to come for something free, has cheapened the library terribly. I wonder whether the absence of nearly all restrictions has not attracted a class who want no restrictions, but their own sweet will. Certainly, the inventory of the open shelf-room was stopped suddenly by Mr. Pierce's orders, and if I could gather anything from a few guarded remarks which Miss Macomber uttered, there was an appalling state of things there. These are heretical sentiments, and they would never put me in favor with Mr. Pierce.

At six o'clock there was a lull, and Miss Barlow and I had supper in the basement dining room. It was a dismal meal, out of paper bags, and cheered only by tea made on the oil stove. From seven to nine the rush went on again. A man named Paddock tried to get me into an argument because I would not renew for him a "seven-day book." He called loudly for the librarian, and Mr. Hobart, the assistant librarian was sent for. They drifted away in a discussion, and I was amused to hear him call Mr. Hobart a "fat-headed, two cent tyrant". The Clarke twins took out a boy's book, decided they didn't want it, and knowing that it could not be returned until Monday, conceived the neat idea of altering the date on their card and on the slip. They took it into the reading room, and with the aid of a knife and a fountain-pen made a sufficiently good imitation of the blue rubber stamp date to cause me to search for some ten minutes for the card, before the imposture was discovered. A very intoxicated man named Jacob Bakkus positively refused to pay a fine and as he was exceedingly disagreeable and as I was tired to death, he got away without paying the two cents. For which I was sharply reprimanded by Miss Macomber. From eight till past nine o'clock there was no rest. It was a constant

reach for the book, reach for the card, hand back the book. All sense of people as separate individuals went from me—there was only a long drawn out monster, a sort of boa-constrictor, or crocodile-like creature called "the public", which forever crawled slowly up to my desk, pushed sticky books at me, and came again with more books. The blurred figures on the cards grew into a blue fog, my forehead was tight with headache, and I slipped and fumbled with my date-stamp. Long after I had gone home, and gone to bed, I could see the unending line of people stretching out in front of me, and I saw it at intervals all night.

THE MAN BEHIND THE ENCYCLOPEDIA

Mr. Bruce Fernald occupies a position in a certain public library which is professionally described as that of "reference librarian". It is usually considered one of the enviable posts in library work, for it is the privilege of such as he not merely "to hand out books over a counter," but to hold the cup of knowledge itself to the lips of the thirsty, and discharge the functions of high priest of the Pierian spring. To his lot it falls to "interpret" dictionaries, encyclopedias and other weighty volumes to the seeker after wisdom, and to aid the student in his researches. This student may be of the "serious" variety, revered by librarians, or he may be a casual inquirer who enters the library but to ask a single simple question, then to go forth forever.

Should there ever be a school established, especially to train persons who wish to learn the elements of this kind of library work, it will probably have engraved over its doors the saying of Dr. Johnson about the two kinds of knowledge—the first being when you know a thing itself, the second when you know where you can find it out. The second kind is supposed to be Mr. Fernald's stock-in-trade. It sometimes fails him, and even after he has had fifty or sixty years of experience it will fail him occasionally. In much that is written professionally about the "qualifications of the reference librarian" it is demanded not only that he be a person of "unfailing tact and courtesy", but that he be also endowed with a degree of omniscience above that of the archangels. It is well to set the ideal high, to hitch our wagon

to a star, but after all it is a wagon we are to hitch—not a steam-calliope nor a chariot of fire. One of Conan Doyle's medical stories tells of a young doctor who, when suddenly called to see his first patient, went half expecting to have to perform a trephining. The patient had the gout.

It is not surprising if a neophyte reference-librarian taking his seat in the reading-room and looking to see Professor Harnack rush in with an abstruse question in Chaldaic transliteration, is somewhat disgusted when a schoolboy enters and asks for last week's Puck. He need not despair—some puzzles worthy of his mental furniture will come to him before long, and every bit of information that he ever gathered anywhere will be of use. Much that he studied in the library school about foreign bibliography will be of service to him, once every five years or so; many things that he reads in the morning paper he will need to use that same day. Both matters are important. It would be a grievous thing if he could not talk among his colleagues of "Antonio Vetus", "Petzholdt", and "Brunet", as if those gentlemen were in the habit of dropping in to tea every day or so. And it would be a bad thing for his own work if he were not informed upon the questions of the day.

Mr. Fernald has to deal with as many kinds of people as of books. There are the frankly ignorant or uninformed; the half baked pretenders to knowledge; and the really learned. He is able to help the first kind; the last named are of much benefit to him. The others furnish him with exasperation and amusement, and they aid in the growth of his soul. There is no work in the world exactly similar to his; no point of view precisely the same. From it he can observe with amazement the chaotic and changing systems of education, and hear its doctors disagree. He can see library work rising suddenly from disconnected units into an embryonic "science"; young, eager to try a new thing, to run a little while in this or that track, and then to

drop them, and shift its course. Some of his comments, written in a letter to a friend about five weeks ago, we are allowed to quote.

"This is a hot night, past nine o'clock, and the reading-room is nearly empty. I am breaking the library's rules in writing this letter, but the few persons who remain are sunk in a comatose state over the illustrated papers. They are unlikely to observe that I am not obeying Mr. Dwight's precept that a reference librarian should occupy himself with library work, while maintaining a degage air, so that people who wish his services will not have to apologize for interrupting him. Just how to do any work worth anything and at the same time appear quite alert and open to inquiries, is something that Mr. Dwight may have solved, but I am free to confess that it remains a mystery to me. However, at the really busy times I do not get a chance to sit down at all, so there can be no cause for suspicion then in the minds of patrons that we spend our time 'just in readin' books.' It is frightfully hot tonight, and numerous insects whiz and buzz cheerfully around my desk-light. I turned an electric fan in this direction until I got a severe crick in the back of my neck; then I had to switch it off and put up with the heat and the critters."

"The big, brown-bearded German who spends every evening here from seven to nine, came in tonight as usual, and stood near my desk. I was aware of him before he spoke or came into sight, for he belongs to some sect which has scruples against bathtubs,—but he is a good fellow at a distance—and I like to talk to him. He mopped his brow, and gleamed at me through his spectacles. 'Ach', he began, 'dis vas dropical! Die young voman oudt dere asked me tit I vant 'Der Chungle' to read! I haf toldt her no; dere vas Chungle enough for me all aroundt! Ho! Ho! How vas dot? See here vat I haf—'Die Americaner', by Munsterberg. You haf been at Harfard—tit you

know Munsterberg? Vell, he iss all right, but he iss too fond of Villum. Who? Of Villum—der Kaiser. See here, dere iss a baper calldt 'Der Bo-o-okmann'—haf you got him? I found him the Bookman, while he looked at a copy of the Ladies' Home Journal which a woman had just left at my desk. I offered him that; but saying he did not want 'her', he went away to a desk, where he sat for two hours, breathing heavily, and reading with evident pleasure."

"This has been a busy day as well as a hot one. The schools are now in full swing, and we have a little one of our own. That is to say, we have a class of 'apprentices'—fourteen women and one lone boy—who are learning library work by 'actual experience'. They are farmed out in twos and threes on the various departments of the library, and I have two in my care. Every three or four days they meet together for a lecture from Mr. Dwight, or some of the rest of us. I feel some diffidence in lecturing on a subject of which I have such a tremendous lot to learn, to a class of persons one or two of whom left school when I was being inspected by relatives and friends to see what color my hair was going to be. Mr. Dwight gave them an introductory talk on Monday. When he assured them that they were beginning a kind of work that was its own reward, and that they must not brood too much over the subject of salaries, I thought I noticed a curious twitching about the corners of the mouth among some of the members of the library staff. Perhaps they remembered that dark day last June when it was announced that the appropriations for the City Council for next year left the chief librarian's salary at \$4000, instead of accepting the trustees' estimate of \$5000."

"The two apprentices who have fallen to my lot are quite dissimilar. One is a girl of what is usually called the 'society' type. Why she has gone into library work is a matter for wonder. It certainly cannot be for the small amount of money—

when even that amount is all in the future and uncertain. Apprentices, as you have probably guessed, work for nothing. This young lady has lived in that part of the country where the average girl has the 'West Point habit', and when one's maiden fancies have played around that gorgeous type of youth, deliberately to throw herself among bespectacled librarians is an act savoring of madness. She regards me with open scorn. While I am delivering the most weighty sentences concerning Littré's Dictionary or the International Encyclopedia, I observe that she is apparently wondering how any live man can spend his time among such things when he might be wearing a lovely gray coat with little tails, white duck trousers and have a beautiful hollow in his back. She looks up the questions which I set her in a listless sort of way, too proud to do bad work, too blase to show any interest in it, and she customarily refers to the 'A. L. A. Catalogue' (Great Heavens!) as 'that old green book'!"

"The other is an eager and intelligent woman, some fifteen years older than Miss Van Ettrick. This one knows so much about reference books that I am unable to find anything to teach her, and in order to get her off my hands for a few hours, so I can do necessary work, I have actually had to try to 'stump' her with difficult questions, well known to reference librarians, and usually requiring hours of research. But does it work? Not with Miss Haskyns! She noses out the information in a little while, and comes up bright and smiling with: 'I found it, Mr. Fernald! It was in Darius Quimby's Encyclopedia on Gothic Horticulture, and there is another book about it by Peleg Warmbatte—they have a copy in the British Museum. What shall I do now?' Miss Haskyns was under the tutelage of Mr. Vincent, the head of the bindery, for two days at the beginning of the week. On the afternoon of the second day Mr. Vincent was seen tearing through the stacks at high speed. He darted into the cataloguer's room, and to the astonishment of

Miss Carey and her myrmidons, jumped behind the door. The cause of his fright was seen in a moment, when Miss Haskyns dashed through the room, hot on his trail. She had learned all about book-binding in forty-eight hours, and was hungry for more. Mr. Vincent went home that night with a nervous attack and has not yet returned."

"I had an agreeable hour early this evening with Admiral Bates. He is writing a book on deep-sea soundings, on which he is an accepted authority. We haven't many books which can help him, but he knows exactly what we have, and he never looks them over with snorts of contempt (like old Professor Gideon, the Greek-coin man) only to declare that he 'supposes he will have to go to Washington to look it up'. The Admiral wears a kind of pith helmet (I suppose it is a pith helmet; I never met one outside of the stories of Kipling or Richard Harding Davis), and in the daytime carries a green-lined umbrella. He has had me help him search out some facts about a number of ocean-exploring voyages, and I can talk quite learnedly on the various 'deeps', and so forth. Most of the book writers who come in are either very fussy, or rather high and mighty, so the Admiral, like his subject, is refreshing."

"We have had a rather curious experience, lasting over three days, with a man who was deeply concerned over the threatened extinction of the American bison, or buffalo. He was always very indignant if one called it the 'buffalo', and rebuked me sharply for committing that error. He arrived in the reading-room one afternoon and delivered an impassioned address on the neglect of the American Government toward this animal. I was under the impression that something had been done for the buffaloes—I mean bison—but he assured me that it was totally inadequate. He said that he was the owner of a large herd (the second largest in the United States) of these interesting creatures, and that he was on his way to Washington to arouse Congress

to take steps in the matter. He became so eloquent, and described in such pathetic terms the condition of this country when it should awake to find itself absolutely unbuffaloeed, that I became quite agitated, and found him all the books and articles that the library contained on the subject. He came in again next morning and aroused my assistant, Miss Bixby, to a state of acute distress by picturing to her startled vision the sad moment when the last buffalo should be gathered to his forefathers. She afterwards confessed that she was somewhat surprised when he borrowed a quarter of her to get some luncheon, but she let him have it, for it struck her as rather noble that he should be travelling about the country almost penniless, rather than sell one of the magnificent buffaloes with which his ranch in Montana was stocked. She said she went out to the Zoo that afternoon and regarded the two buffaloes there with renewed interest. "

" From Miss Bixby the man passed on into the office of Mr. Dwight, where he waxed positively lyric over the buffalo and his dwindling grandeur. Mr. Dwight is a supporter of the Audubon Society, and he plasters the whole front of the library with colored pictures of birds, though he is totally unable himself to tell a guinea-hen from a cock-robin. He became instantly aroused in behalf of the buffalo and I was forthwith commanded to compile a bibliography of buffaloes. That is his panacea—bibliography. Mr. Dwight is a good man, and a learned librarian, but I cannot, at times, help feeling that he places an undue amount of trust on bibliography as a remedy for the ills that beset mankind. When the Messina earthquake occurred, he was terribly distressed by the suffering, until he had typewritten a bibliography of earthquakes. After that he leaned back in his chair, and, I verily believe, felt convinced that he had taken no small share in improving conditions in Sicily. "

" Well, at any rate, it was not very difficult to please him in this matter. For the rest of that day there was nothing but

buffaloes. The following day the owner of the herd returned again and was rapidly getting the whole library staff excited on the subject, when two men, who had driven up in a closed carriage, entered the library. They sought out the buffalo man, and one of them got him into the carriage, while the other told Miss Carter that he (the buffalo man) had recently escaped from a private sanatorium, and that he had never been west of Utica in his life. How or why he became interested in buffaloes nobody could say, but I will certify that it was a topic on which his conversation was 'convincing'.

"The ethics of librarians taking tips is a subject on which I meditate a 'paper' for some library publication. I do not mean tips on the stock market, nor on the races, but tips of the kind which you give to waiters. I say *you* give them, for it is charged against librarians, by hotel employees, that they do not give tips. How should they? When their remuneration becomes equal to that of the waiters, perhaps they may. But a man for whom I looked up a point about the registration of dentists in this State (it took me half an hour's hunting) brought the book back to my desk, and slipped me something wrapped in a bit of paper. He went out instantly, and when I had opened the paper I found that the object was a ten-cent piece! I believe that Anthony Trollope was once given sixpence for escorting some German royalty through the post office, and I know how he felt. Ten cents! Had he made the insult sufficiently great, as Pooh-Bah said, I might have swallowed it, but I think I shall contribute that dime toward the distressed buffaloes."

"Only this evening I made a painful discovery about one of our oldest and most valued readers. He has been coming in for months—years, perhaps—and he always asks for one book, 'Plato's Republic', in the original, mind you, and in one of those miserable little German editions. He will have no other, and on one occasion when his pet copy was out and Miss

Bixby offered him an attractive, annotated edition he became perfectly furious. While it is being brought he amuses himself with illustrated periodicals. When it comes, he retires into a corner and (apparently) reads Plato with burning devotion for hours at a time. He has become an institution; I told Mr. Dwight about him and he was simply entranced. He came into the reading-room and looked at the Plato man, and rubbed his hands with glee. I think he meditated having the man's picture taken to put in the report. Tonight I happened to pass behind the man, looking for some book, when I was overwhelmed to notice that he had Plato upside down! I thought perhaps it was an accident and that he had gone to sleep—but no, there were distinct thumb-marks on the top of the page that showed that he always held the book that way. It was quite worn and tattered in that spot. I went around in front of him and looked at his eyes—they seemed to be wide open, and they were fixed on the pages. After I got back to my desk I looked at him now and again, but I never saw him turn a leaf in an hour. What joy he finds in glaring at a Greek text, upside down, for hours at a time is beyond me. Is he really asleep, with his eyes open? Or does he put himself through all that weariness just for the sake of the few minutes he spends on the illustrated papers before Plato comes? If so, why on earth does he think it necessary to make this classical bluff as though it were a shameful thing to look at Harper's Weekly and the Literary Digest? I have known people to go to lengths almost as wild as that. Or is he trying to hypnotize himself? What do you think? I will give you—let me see—I will give you the ten-cent piece I got as a tip, for a satisfactory answer."

AN AMATEUR'S NOTIONS OF BOYS' BOOKS. *

In the book by Mr. Edmund Gosse called "Father and Son" there occurs the following anecdote told of a boy eight or nine years of age. The boy's parents left him very much to himself, and like other boys he found his way into the garret:

"The garret was a fairy place. It was a low lean-to, lighted from the roof. It was wholly unfurnished, except for two objects, an ancient hat-box and a still more ancient skin-trunk. The skin-trunk was absolutely empty, but the inside of the lid of it was lined with sheets of what I now know to have been a sensational novel. It was, of course, a fragment, but I read it, kneeling on the bare floor, with indescribable rapture. It will be recollected that the idea of fiction, of a deliberately invented story, had been kept from me with entire success. I therefore implicitly believed the tale in the lid of the trunk to be a true account of the sorrows of a lady of title, who had to flee the country, and who was pursued into foreign lands by enemies bent upon her ruin. Somebody had an interview with a 'minion' in a 'mask'; I went downstairs and looked up those words in Bailey's 'English Dictionary', but was left in darkness as to what they had to do with the lady of title. This ridiculous fragment filled me with delicious fears; I fancied that my mother, who was out so much, might be threatened by dangers of the same sort;

* Read at the convention of the American Library Association, Lake Minnetonka, Minn., June, 1908.

and the fact that the narrative came abruptly to an end, in the middle of one of its most thrilling sentences, wound me up almost to a disorder of wonder and romance."

A few years later he came into contact with other works of fiction. His father declined to allow him to read the *Waverley Novels* on the ground that those tales gave false and disturbing pictures of life, and would lead away his attention from heavenly things. But Scott's poems were permitted, and stranger still, under the circumstances, the novels of Dickens. Mr. Gosse writes: "I recollect that my step-mother showed some surprise at this, and that my father explained to her that Dickens 'exposes the passion of love in a ridiculous light'. She did not seem to follow this recommendation which indeed tends to the ultra-subtle, but she procured for me a copy of '*Pickwick*' by which I was instantly and gloriously enslaved. My shouts of laughing at the richer passages were almost scandalous, and led to my being reprov'd for disturbing my father while engaged, in an upper room, in the study of God's Word. I must have expended months in the perusal of '*Pickwick*', for I used to rush through a chapter, and then read it over again very slowly, word for word, and then shut my eyes to realize the figures and the action. I suppose no child will ever again enjoy that rapture of unresisting humorous appreciation of '*Pickwick*'. I felt myself to be in the company of a gentleman so extremely funny that I began to laugh before he began to speak; no sooner did he remark 'the sky was dark and gloomy, the air was damp and raw', than I was in fits of laughter."

I have quoted these passages because they form one of the latest published accounts of a common experience—a boy's enthrallment by imaginative literature. While it is safe to suppose that few boys begin their acquaintance with fiction through tales like that of the minion in a mask, or, on the other hand, are able so early to enjoy *Pickwick*, yet the emotion is much the

same whatever the yarn. There is nothing like it. A boy's first trip to the land of story-books—it is like the first island landfall described in Stevenson's "South Seas" and all the other wonderful sunrises in fact and in romance. It is the privilege of many of the members of this Association to start boys, if not on their first trip to the land of wonders, at least on early voyages. The privilege is more highly valued than it used to be, and more wisely exercised. And it is well that it should be appreciated, for of all the tasks that fall to librarians, this is one of the pleasantest. Some of us are charmed to have drawn the shop-girl from the level plains of Laura Jean Libby to the altitudes of Mr. Howells. Others thrill with delight at capturing a genuine "workingman" and at sending him away enraptured with Trautwine's "Civil Engineer's Pocket-book". To me these joys seem pale, indeed, compared with opening the magic casements for others, and living over again, in one moment, the hours of happiness.

The small boy (and perhaps, the small girl, but I do not claim to know much about her) is almost the only person left who is allowed to read for the pure fun of the thing. Those of us who are not engaged in an unblushing assault upon romance and fiction, are sheepishly apologizing for it. We are patting Dickens and Thackeray, forsooth, upon the back, and assuring them that they are pretty good fellows, after all. Led on by the necessity of appeasing "practical" trustees, we admit that we do have novels in our libraries, yes, and we are not ashamed of it either ; but then, we have plenty of really valuable books that tell how to dig post holes, and shingle roofs. A magazine editor, in a moment of idleness, writes a space-filler alleging that libraries haven't as many books about potato bugs and traction engines as they should have, and a chill goes down the spine of the entire American Library Association. Of course, grown-ups do not read novels any longer for the mere pleasure of it. They do

it because they are taking a course in English prose fiction, or they do it for "general culture" or "education", or some other noble purpose. And librarians read them to see if they are all right for other people to read. So in the rising tide of utilitarianism and pose there remains one small island, upon which is seated the small boy—almost the only honest reader we have left.

It is good to know that he is encouraged. The change has come in recent years. I can remember a librarian who always insisted on my taking home a book called "Spectacles for Young Eyes". He wished, you see, to fit me out with eye-glasses before the natural course of misfortune did so. As I was afraid of him, I often took the book home; and, as soon as I dared, returned it, —unread. There were no children's librarians then, or I might have fared better. Improvements have been made in the treatment of boys in libraries, and improvements have yet to be made.

There are certain axioms concerning boys' books which it may be well to state. No one, I suppose, denies that a boy's book must have action, and that it must not preach. Another opinion, widely held, but not everywhere accepted, I am glad to say, is that these books must contain, somewhere, a "moral", and that they must, somehow, be "instructive". I am glad to say that the necessity of the "moral" is not everywhere accepted, for it would, of course, deprive boys of some of their best books, just as the same requirements would deprive adults of many of the noblest works of literature. As for the "instructive" element, it would seem to need no argument that the schools are cramming children too much already; that libraries are now assisting in school work (not necessarily in the cramming) and that if every story-book chocolate-drop must be accompanied by its cod-liver oil of "instruction", there is precious little joy left in life. Few libraries object to "Treasure Island", but how, except by the veriest cant, do you find either a "moral" or "instruction" in it?

If a boy's book is to have action it will usually deal with one of three things,—war, sport or travel. Some persons would exclude war from the list,—I believe that a well-meaning gentleman returned only last summer from a European trip spent in a vain endeavor to induce the makers of toy-soldiers to desist from their diabolical trade. It may be questioned whether the influence of certain books has not been exaggerated. Certainly, "dime-novels" have received more than their fair amount of blame. They have been made a scape-goat when the real cause of a boy's misdoings lay far deeper. They are cheap and frequently dull, and no one wishes to see them in the public libraries. The amount of horror they cause many worthy people is, however, absurd, and is frequently founded upon a complete ignorance of their contents.

An author who combines adventure with instruction in a curious fashion is Captain Mayne Reid. Some one has lately described his method. He will end a chapter, said this writer, with words after this fashion: "There was a rustling in the bushes, a low growl, and then the bushes parted before a terrible, hairy form. Jack gazed upon the open, foam-flaked jaws, the savage teeth, the glaring eyes. There was no doubt about it. With his last cartridge spent, Jack was confronted by that terror of the Rockies, the Grizzly Bear." So ends chapter 12, and you naturally turn the page in great excitement to see how Jack got out of this difficulty. But chapter 13 begins, "The Grizzly Bear (*Ursus horribilis Americanus*) is an hybernating animal",—and so on for the entire chapter, about the manners and customs of the bear, while he and Jack are left glaring at each other, and you are in the most painful suspense. But the charm of this method is that all this "instructive" matter is in a lump, and you can skip right ahead to chapter 14, and find out how Jack slew the bear. For those whose interest lies chiefly in facts, I may say that I have been told by a man in a position to know,

that Mayne Reid's statements about the wild lands that his books describe have never been found in any important degree inaccurate.

Do boys read Jules Verne now? There has been more or less talk about his being supplanted by Mr. H. G. Wells, but I cannot believe that boys would prefer the Englishman. I used to think Captain Nemo the most magnificent of mysterious heroes. Jules Verne had a gallery of wooden characters, but their adventures were passing fine. I was very proud of a note which I once received from him, in reply to one which I addressed to him in the French of Stratford-atte-Bowe. The books of Horatio Alger and his school do not, I believe, meet the approval of the modern children's librarian. I cannot shed any tears over his loss, for only one of his was familiar to me. I should be sorry to see Harry Castlemon packed off, however, and it does not seem that the librarians who banish Alger and Optic have a very strong position. There are not many to take their places. Mr. Trowbridge is still in favor, as he certainly should be, with his two excellent stories,—"*Cudjo's Cave*" and "*The Three Scouts*."

The chief appeal that is made for the works of the late Mr. Henty is that certain things can be got "out of" them. What I got out of the few I tried to read was weariness of the flesh. With their everlasting prefaces beginning "*My Dear Lads*" and their stereotyped heroes, they covered a period from the dawn of time down to yesterday afternoon, and they blazed a trail of earnest mediocrity. Lowell says of Cooper's Indians that they are only Natty Bumppo daubed over with red. Mr. Henty's heroes are one youth with a variety of costumes that might make the German Emperor envious. If Mr. Henty had been alive at the time of the California earthquake, I suppose there would have been a volume from his pen within two days called "*With Funston in 'Frisco*", and there would have been a deal of

useful information in it. I believe that many boys read the Henty books and like them, so it is a pleasure to know that they are considered "educative" and not likely to be cast out.

The two best books for American boys are "Huckleberry Finn" and "Tom Sawyer". There is a determined attempt in many libraries to keep boys from reading them. Like many attempts it is well-meaning, and like many well-meaning attempts it is entirely mistaken. In its inception and progress it has been largely a feminine movement. Nothing more clearly demonstrates the need for men librarians to take an interest in boys' books; nothing shows better how women often fail to realize that boys and girls cannot be judged by one standard. Those who know and love "Huckleberry Finn" do not need to hear it praised. They realize that its author knew boys as very few have done. They know that it has furnished the inspiration for a number of more or less successful imitators. Mr. Kenneth Grahame and Mr. Kipling have both drawn upon it and the best parts of Mr. Barrie's delicious play "Peter Pan" owe a great debt to it. It is literature in a high sense, because it is a transcript of life. It represents boys not as Sunday School teachers wish them to be, but as they are, and those who condemn it for this reason must also, to be consistent, condemn the great realistic novels for adults. Some of its passages are never to be forgotten,—the description of Colonel Grangerford is as vivid a bit of writing as Thackeray's famous picture of Beatrix descending the stair-case. Of course, it must be admitted that there are lapses from the best taste in it, and a few things that we could wish omitted. But there is no great writer of whom this is not true, and for the mind that sees nothing in the book but vulgarity, what can be said, except that it indicates a prudery that would have probably abolished Shakespeare on account of a few passages objectionable to modern taste. Children's departments may condemn or "restrict" the book, but it will

merely have the effect of sending the boys where they can get it,—either the adults' department of the same library, or elsewhere.

I have indicated a belief that certain improvements are yet to be made in the treatment of boys in libraries. One of these is a frank acknowledgment of the fact that books for entertainment are books for entertainment, and need not be sugar-coated pills covering the medicine of "instruction" or "morals". The Puritan idea is long-lived, but there is no more reason for insisting that books read for fun shall have a "moral" wrapped up in them than in compelling boys before going in swimming to listen to a lecture on the theory of displacement of fluids. Men should have more to say in the choice of boys' books, and there should be more independence of judgment in the matter by both sexes. I have seen indications that the condemnation of a book by one or two persons prominent in children's libraries carries such weight as to lead others to ascribe the most fearful characteristics to the book without themselves really knowing much about it. Books that may horrify or frighten little girls do not necessarily frighten or harm little boys,—a fact not everywhere patent to children's librarians. Yet it must be said, by one seeking to be fair, that the children's librarian of today is almost universally more sane and broad-minded than the librarian, either man or woman, of a past generation, and moreover, that there occasionally arise men, who for prudishness surpass the most finical woman who ever existed.

My strongest appeal is for the boy who reads "for fun" and tastes one of the great joys of life. A boy who was not very old eighteen years ago recalls capturing a certain English magazine which contained a story by his favorite writer. To make sure of reading it undisturbed he sneaked it away from the other boys who used to play in the garden of that house on summer evenings, and climbed up into a cherry tree. The twilight and his

insecure position probably added to the effect of the story, but he is very sure that if he could have his choice between that hour over again or an election as librarian of the British Museum, the trustees of the Museum would have to look for some one else.

We may fancy that a crowd of boys once followed an old blind man about the streets of a seaport town. The old man told, or perhaps sang, in the custom of the day, the most wonderful stories about fighting men, who had crossed the seas, and fought for ten years about the walls of a great city.

Probably there were in that town persons who became alarmed at the spectacle. They went to the boys and said: "Do not listen to this old beggar any longer. I am afraid you will get a taste for fighting. These are dangerous stories,—they may lead you to form an Achilles Club, and sail off to fight with foreigners. Besides, what he says is probably not true. Come over and listen while some one or other talks about the habits of the honey-bees, or hear what the great philosopher Whatsisname has to say about cosmos. The sandal-maker who lives down by the wharf has invented a new way to fasten sandals,—come down and learn how that is done. These things would be useful and instructive—not full of false and dangerous ideas of life, such as the tales this blind man tells."

But the boys kept on following the blind man just the same, for they didn't have to learn what aorist passive means, nor yet iota subscript, before they understood him. He spoke their own language, and they wanted to know whether Hector or Achilles came out on top. They were just as much interested in all these adventures as the boys of another country thousands of years later are to hear of a boy and a negro slave who floated down the Mississippi on a raft and had exciting adventures on the way. And meanwhile we have a new set of theories about the honey-bees; the great philosopher Whatsisname has had his

idea about cosmos upset and reinstated five or six times, and the wonderful invention of the sandal-maker is entirely lost, and would not do us much good if it were found. But the old blind man's stories, fictitious as they may be, and bloody as they undoubtedly are, survive ; and the hearts of boys are hungry still for other stories like them.

THE SQUARE PEG

When one of the library magazines announces that a young gentleman, recently graduated from a library school, has "accepted" a position in this or that library the uninitiated might think that the whole thing had been very simple. One fancies the young man sitting quietly at home, while various celebrated librarians call upon him and urge him to give them the benefit of his distinguished services. One man, at least, had a slightly different experience, and he has consented to relate it for our benefit.

"The summer that I left the library school I began to be aware that there were few points of attack. Though the country was dotted with libraries, each had its smiling chief, complacent, healthy, and long-lived. I stood before the country, full of bibliothecal theory, not wholly innocent of experience, but no municipality called for me, no college called aloud my name. I yearned to 'bring unto the people the books that belonged to them', and to be an apostle of light and culture in their midst, but the people regarded my yearnings with a calmness bordering upon complete indifference."

"I cast my vision over the whole United States, and as the orators say, from the Kennebec to the Rio Grande, from the Everglades of Florida to the Whatyoumaycallems of Oregon the word went forth that I awaited the summons—a librarian manqué. The school stood by me nobly, and my name went

east and west and south and north like the heralds of Lars Porsena. Replies of a sort were quick. I had not reached my home before a telegram had arrived—a librarian was spending a few days in New York: would I come and see him with a view to becoming his assistant? I spent a very hot day hunting him, but in the time that intervened between the sending of his despatch and my arrival—a delay for which I was in no manner to blame, he had become convinced that I was not the man for him, and had gone, like great Orion, sloping slowly to the West. He had found an assistant en route. The mishap was hardly finished before glittering accounts of a new library in a northeastern town sent me into the land of maple sugar. The library—that is, the building—was certainly there. A selectman unlocked it for me and showed me about. There must have been nearly two hundred books—counting magazines as such. 'Well, he sposed they might want a librarian. He didn't know. Salary? Well, old Mis' Carroll had been librarian and she didn't get no salary—liked to have the place to set and do her knittin'. He sposed the new librarian (if Mis' Carroll didn't get well and take it up again) could count on board and keep anyhow. Next train for Boston? Oh, it leaves at four twenty'."

"That night the 'library of my own' idea did not seem so feasible and I addressed letters to three or four of the great libraries. The replies were all polite and fiendishly non-committal. They all enclosed blank applications for me to fill out. Some of these applications were sufficiently searching in their inquiries to fulfill the requirements of a matriculation at Oxford, an enlistment in the army, confirmation in the Church, and the purchase of an insurance policy. I filled them all out—it took a day or two—and sent them in. Meanwhile the hunt went on. A Western college president was visiting the Atlantic coast in search of health and a librarian. He cost me something in postage and telegraph tolls. The way the man would dart about

was unbelievable. A telegram would arrive saying 'Meet me Colonial Club at 12', and I would hurry out to Cambridge only to find another message, 'Had to go back to New Rochelle, sorry.' Finally I met him at Kennebunkport. He was pleasant, and he gave me a good luncheon, but he shook his head the minute he saw me. 'I didn't know you were so young', and that ended me. I was frequently under the accusation of being young that summer. I wondered if these gentlemen really expected to find that the applicant for their seventy-five-dollars-a-month positions was a man sixty years of age, fresh from thirty years' experience as Directeur of the Bibliotheque Nationale. One of the great libraries suggested that I might come there and work for nothing if I liked, but that did not seem to be any improvement over filling the shoes of the moribund Mis' Carroll—especially as her library was only open Wednesday and Saturday afternoons."

"Discouraged at being thought too young, I assumed a pair of heavily rimmed spectacles and a serious expression the next time I interviewed a board of trustees. I was rewarded for this effort by hearing afterwards that the leading member of the board—a lady—thought that I was altogether too solemn, and feared I had no sense of humor. One library found that my educational equipment was not sufficient; another was sorely prejudiced against anyone who had attended a library training school. With one librarian it was all over when he saw me smoking. Another, with whom I took luncheon, offered me beer, and when I declined on account of the heat and drank iced tea, he immediately stiffened up, took his bottle of beer with a sarcastic manner and made certain remarks which convinced me that I appeared in his eyes a mere priggish teetotaler. I arose at early hours and galloped to distant parts of the state. The correspondence that I conducted was, to say the least, voluminous, and friends whom I named as references began to receive

inquiries about me from the uttermost parts of the earth. One of them got the impression that I had enlisted as a book agent."

"I was not uniformly unsuccessful, of course. One or two libraries in far off places, one or two where the salary was not large enough to attract more experienced persons, intimated that they would receive me with open arms. Teachers' agencies pestered me with correspondence. The fact that one library would consider me as unavailable for some quality the lack of which had inspired another to reject me was curiously illustrated, particularly in one case. A certain library found that I had not shown sufficient earnestness in trying to get a position. The reason for my impassive attitude is easily explained. I had just finished an active campaign in another town. This place had just built a new library, when its librarian was called to what are usually termed 'greater spheres of usefulness'. A large number of persons began to seek the position. Some of them—a very few—were either librarians or library school graduates, like myself. The rest included city politicians, teachers, and even a retired undertaker. The choice lay with the board of trustees, in which an ex-officio membership belonged to the mayor and one or two more city officials. I found that the other candidates were calling upon the trustees like aspirants for the French Academy. So I plunged into the struggle. I interviewed them all. The mayor received me with ceremony in his room of state. The president of the board of aldermen I only found after a long search. His son led me to the rear of the parental cigar shop and pointed out a ladder that leaned against a shed. I ascended the ladder and found His Worship painting the tin roof. He received me courteously and I expounded my case. There was some difficulty in doing this impressively, however, for the shed overlooked a railroad track. Trains were passing almost constantly, and I had to describe my attractions in a series of spasmodic yells. I do not remember that the library school

gave one any instructions how to convince an alderman of one's capabilities in librarianship under these circumstances. But I finished and went down the ladder—my throat full of cinders. I fear that the president did not vote for me, when the time came, for the undertaker swept all before him, and is librarian even unto this day. Perhaps he has solved the vexed question that troubles so many librarians—what to do with 'dead books'."

"This campaign rather sickened me for active efforts, and I tried the merely receptive attitude, with the ill success which I have mentioned. At times I would stop and ask myself 'What is it that maketh the librarian? For some I am too young, for others too far gone in age. I must either smoke or not, drink or not, be earnest or frivolous, grave or gay, lively or severe. Is there some divine middle course that I have missed? What is it? Or is there a vast, far-reaching conspiracy against me?' I overhauled the notes of the lectures which I had attended on the 'Qualifications of a Librarian', and I asked myself, is there any one of these requirements which my rival, the undertaker, fulfills? And with my hand on my heart I answered, 'Not one'. Yet there he sat, in his place of power, purveyor of knowledge to the whole city of Poodelville, while I, forsooth, I, might howl without, for all the Poodelvillians cared. The question was too great for me, and while I was still worried by it, there came the combination of the time, the place, and the library, which put my doubts aside."

" MEETING THE PUBLIC "

In the——Public Library, Miss Florence Carter is known as " chief of the circulation division. " She has been in the service of the library twelve years, is a graduate of Smith, and has spent a year on one occasion, and two or three months at other times in studying library work at schools established for teaching that subject. Her duties are simple. She is commander-in-chief of twelve women—some of them older than herself, but most of them younger ; and of eight boys, of about the high school age—pages or messengers. She arranges the schedules of work, and the work itself for these twenty persons ; keeps a complicated set of statistics concerning the number of books issued each day, and divided into about a dozen classes of the various kinds of literature ; supervises the mailing of dozens of notices daily to persons who have not returned their books promptly, or who have not called to get books which they have requested ; represents the library to hundreds of persons who are unaware of, or indifferent to the existence of a chief librarian somewhere in an inner office ; keeps track of the names and knows something about the contents of the current books of the day, not only novels, but history, travel, biography and art criticism ; can discuss the question whether Mrs. Ward's latest heroine is " convincing " with an admirer of that novelist, or tell a man when the library is going to get the newest edition of somebody's book on the scientific construction of culverts. Also, if necessary, she takes the

place of any one of her assistants at the desk, when that one is carried off amid the fumes of lavender smelling salts; teaches something of her art to three or four "apprentices," who are finding themselves on the working side of a library desk for the first time; puts in a pleasant evening at home with the statistics, two or three times a month; and employs other hours of her own time in looking at a daily newspaper, six weekly reviews, two fortnightlies, and about fifteen monthly magazines, all read primarily in connection with her work. She has charge of between two and three thousand dollars a year, taken in over the desks in sums of two, four, or eight cents at a time. She can, moreover, tell a person who wants to write a "paper" on "The Old Cities of Florida" and who has asked if "The Confessions of St. Augustine" is the best book to begin with, that there are better books for the purpose, and see that that person gets the better ones without experiencing the slightest wound to his or her feelings. She works eleven months in the year, six days to the week, and seven or eight hours to the day, and she gets almost as much salary as a high-school teacher who works nine months in the year, five days to the week, and five or six hours to the day.

Of an afternoon at the library she wrote recently to a friend as follows: "Miss Robinson is best of all at the issue desk, for she never loses her head. I did feel sorry for her this afternoon when Professor Sears came in. When he enters the library everyone stops and looks at him. With his big slouch hat, white hair and whiskers he looks like Walt Whitman; but the resemblance ends there, for I believe Whitman was rather genial in manner. Professor Sears usually sends his daughter ahead of him in the morning and she spends an hour or two at the catalogue. She is a rapid and experienced worker and she makes out a thick packet of call-slips, which the professor presents at the desk when he arrives in the afternoon. On this particular

afternoon he handed in about a hundred. Some of them called for the volumes of a scientific magazine covering the last thirty-five years, and there were also a large number of reports of the Smithsonian Institution among his wants. The pages brought them first in armfuls; then they came with loaded trucks. They started into the reading room with them, but the professor snapped his fingers and beckoned for them to be placed on the issue desk, where Miss Robinson, balanced on a stool was trying to keep her cards and records straight, and attend to the wants of the eight or nine people gathered in front of her. When the piles of books began to look like so many Towers of Babel, she asked him very melodiously, if he wouldn't rather have them in the reading room, where he could have a desk and a chair. He was already engaged in examining one of them—his hat pushed back on his head, his walking stick under his arm, and pointing out straight behind him, and his spectacles well down on his nose. She had to repeat her question twice, till the professor raised his head, looked at her, grunted like a hippopotamus rising to the surface of the water and then went on with his reading. A few minutes afterward I heard Miss Barlow pointing out the professor to one of the apprentices. 'That is the famous Professor Sears', she said, 'the man who discovered the moons of Mercury, and is on the editorial board of sixteen encyclopedias. He belongs to more learned societies in Europe than all the other people in America put together, and it takes two columns of fine print to name the universities that have given him honorary degrees. He has just been awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of the Dark Brown Eagle by Kaiser William, and he has the manners of a rhinoceros and the gentle graciousness of a polar bear. Whenever he comes in you must let him have all he wants, in any way he wants it, for as long as he likes, and let him do whatever he pleases with it, or he will get frightfully angry, and never come in again'."

" While Miss Robinson was struggling along in the shadow of the professor's mountains of books, Miss Bixby came out of the reading-room, followed by a sullen looking little woman in a brown dress. She came over to me. " Miss Carter, I wish you would see that this lady gets some of these books. I have made out the slips for her. She wants to study Holland in the seventeenth century, and she won't have any books unless they call it 'Holland'. Most of them call it the Netherlands, or the Low Countries, or else Flanders and she thinks I am trying to give her something which is not genuine'. She glanced over at the woman, who was regarding the catalogue with great contempt, and then added, 'She's awful!' With that Miss Bixby retreated into the reading-room. "

" I sent Jimmie with the call-slips, and he presently returned with four or five of the books. The woman had sauntered slowly over to one end of the desk, opposite to that at which Professor Searls was pursuing his researches, and I showed her the books. She never looked straight at them, nor did she look at me. Instead, she kept her eyes directed downward, and glanced at the volumes in a slanting fashion. When she spoke it sounded as if her voice issued from one corner of her mouth. 'I want something about Holland', she remarked. 'These are about Holland', I explained, 'only, most of the older books call it by its older name'. She pointed to the heading of a chapter: 'That says Netherlands', she muttered from the side of her mouth. I started to explain, but she sidled away, and I saw her a few minutes later examining a book about wild-flowers. "

When I turned around I found Mr. Doty standing at my elbow. Mr. Doty is a trustee of the library, and the only one who ever comes near it, except when there is a meeting of the board. His silky smile was all ready, and he shook hands in his usual fashion — holding my hand some three or four times longer than was necessary. 'Ah, Miss Carter,' he began, 'busy as

usual—always busy! Wonderful—wonderful—I don't see how you do it. All your assistants here, busy as bees, too! Ah! it's a great work, a great work—the university of the people—that is what I call this library, Miss Carter—the university of the people!' And he had the air of a man who has made an original and startling remark. Then he turned from epigrams to business. 'But there is a little thing that I want to speak to you about, Miss Carter. I have here a copy of the Forum which I brought from the reading-room. Of course, I don't want Miss Bixby to know anything about this'. He glanced over his shoulder in the direction of the reading-room, and opened the magazine binder which held the Forum. On the top of the magazine was stamped rather faintly in blue ink the words: 'Presented by Ferdinand K. Doty'. Then he explained: 'You know I give \$100 a year to provide magazines. We subscribe to about twenty of the leading periodicals through this fund. Now, look at that stamp. You can hardly read the name. I have spoken to Dr. Pierce about it, and he went to Miss Bixby in the matter. That was three months ago. It improved for a while, but now it is back where it was before. I know Miss Bixby means to do well, but some of her assistants must be getting careless. I don't wish to speak to her myself—can't you give her a hint?' "

"I promised Mr. Doty that I would do what I could about it, and he smilingly departed, going the rounds of the library, shaking hands (in his most lingering manner) with all the girls. As he left, Edgar came to me and said that Dr. Pierce, the librarian, wished to see me in his office. I started in that direction, but not before Dr. Pierce came hurrying out with his coat-tails flying. 'Miss Carter, I wish you would look up to see what books we have on Holland in the seventeenth century. Come in my office and see this lady, she is going to study the subject . . . ' We were in his office now and he looked round blankly: 'Why,

where has she gone? She was here a minute ago! She must have gone into the fine arts department', and he darted through into that room."

"When I got back to the desk, a woman who had been talking with Miss Robinson detached herself and came toward me. She was clothed in a singular costume, that was somehow suggestive of the Orient, and I almost expected to see that she wore sandals. She had a scarf thrown over her head in place of a hat, and her dark hair was parted in the middle. If you can imagine George Eliot preparing to go to a ball in the costume of Cleopatra you will get some idea of what she looked like. She addressed me in low and thrilling tones. 'Good afternoon. The young lady at the desk told me you have charge of this part of the library. Perhaps you can tell me what I am interested to learn. I understand that you purchase the novels of the leading writers in large numbers, do you not?' I said that it was true. 'Now, when Mrs. Ward produces a new book, how many copies do you take?' I said that we buy from thirty to fifty copies of Mrs. Ward's books. 'And Mrs. Wharton?' she inquired in solemn tones. 'Mrs. Wharton is not so popular', I answered; 'you understand I do not mean to say that her novels are not as good — personally, I prefer them, but she is not quite as popular. Still, we take nearly as many'. The woman regarded me intently. 'And Morton', she said — 'Millicent Morton?' I hesitated for a moment, for I could not recall immediately who Millicent Morton was. Then I remembered — of course, she is the author of 'Loves of Long Ago', 'Hand-clasps by the Firelight' and a whole line of intensely sentimental books that are usually issued in padded silk bindings embroidered with forget-me-nots, and printed on paper highly decorated with pink roses and marguerites. Her works are said to sell like wild-fire, especially among languishing maidens, and are advertised as eminently suitable for 'gift-books'. It did not take me long

to remember all this, and I had to smile a little at Millicent Morton's proximity to Mrs. Wharton. 'I think we always get a copy of her books', I said, and as I did so I was aware that Miss Barlow, in the distance, was making violent signs and gesticulations at me. I was too stupid at the moment to realize what she meant, however. The Oriental-looking person repeated with great astonishment: 'You get *a* copy—one copy only, do I understand? And you buy thirty copies of Edith Wharton? Good heavens, what taste! Who is responsible for such actions?'

"At this moment a small man came hurriedly into the library, rushed up to the indignant lady, and exclaimed 'Oh, here you are! Hurry now, or we'll be late'. She turned slowly about, looked me over with what I suppose was scorn so withering that I ought to have shrivelled up like a caterpillar on a hot shovel, repeated with great emphasis: 'One copy! Good God!' and glided slowly out with the little man. Instantly Miss Barlow rushed over to me. 'Don't you know who that is? That's Millicent Morton, the author of 'Loves of Long Ago' and all those other books. I hope you didn't tell her that Dr. Pierce won't have her books in the library—if you did she'll put us all in her next novel—authors are always getting peevish at librarians and doing that'."

"Jimmie now brought me a note from Miss Larkin, the children's librarian. It said: 'I do wish you would send me down some books on Holland in the seventeenth century. There's a woman here after books about Holland, and nothing that I can find will satisfy her'. I was composing a note to assure Miss Larkin of my deep sympathy when Mrs. J. Pomfret Smith sailed up to my desk. She moved amid a rustle of silks, and her hat loomed on the horizon—a thing portentous, like a child's old-fashioned bathtub. But before beginning to speak she saw Dr. Pierce in his office—the door was open. I think he saw her, and that he would have retreated into the wardrobe, but he was too late.

She bore down on him, with one hand outstretched ; the other clutching a mass of flapping papers. I could hear her distinctly, and so could everybody in that part of the building. 'Dr. Pierce? Oh, how do you do? I have never met you before, but I know Mrs. Pierce. And I have used the library for *years*. I often got books here when old Mr. Akers was librarian, but I was quite a girl then, and I guess I never read much but fairy books. I almost always ask for Miss Anderson when I come here ; she is lovely—a perfect *treasure*—and takes such pains. But they say she's away on her vacation, and so is Miss Hardy, in the reading-room. Now, I'm going to read a paper next Monday afternoon before the Twenty-Minute Culture Club ; it's the first meeting of the season, and at my house. Here's the title: 'Italian Painters of Cinquecento'. I can't for the life of me find where Cinquecento is, and I've looked through all the gazetteers and geographies you've got. Mrs. Brooks gave me the name of a lot of painters, but I don't believe she knows much about them, or where they came from. First, there is Vassery's *Lives of the Painters* ; then there is this Carlo Dolce far Niente, who lived in 1497, and painted frescos for the Basilica of San Raphael, whoever he may be. And I know I've read an article somewhere about Bambino ; I wish you would let me take some book about him. Oh, yes, I remember ; he was a monk who fell in love with a nun he was painting, and instead of eloping with her, retired to a convent and wrote sonnets about her all the rest of his life. The Italians are *such* an artistic race, and their art is *so* mingled with their love affairs. There was someone, I remember—I think it was Ponte Vecchio, but I am not sure—who painted a lady's portrait, and had musicians playing all the time so her husband wouldn't hear him make love to her. Oh, I remember it all ! You recall it, don't you, Dr. Pierce? There is a picture, I saw it not long ago, that shows him meeting her, and he has his hand on his heart. When he died he left all his

sonnets to his friend, Vita Nuova, and made him swear to bury them all in the lady's coffin, and he did, and they weren't dug up for a hundred years, and then nobody could read what they were about, because they were all written in cipher. Then they were published in the Golden Book of Venice, and every year they made the Doge jump into the sea. Then I want to get a book about Andrea del Sarto because it struck me that Sarto was the name of the present pope, and it would be interesting to see if they are related. And I wonder ——!"



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